

PRA SNOPANISAD

प्रश्नोपनिषद्



Swami Chinmayananda

PRASNOPANISHAD



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अजमपि जनियोगं प्रापदैश्वर्यं योगा-
दगतिं च गतिमत्तां प्रापदेकं ह्यनेकम्।
विविध विषय धर्म ग्राहिमुग्धेक्षणानां
प्रणतभय विहन्तुं ब्रह्म यत्तन्नतोऽस्मि॥

(शंकराचार्य-कारिकाभाष्योपसंहार-वन्दना)

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

MOTHER, SALUTATIONS ACCEPT

Salutation to Madurai Meenakshi
Salutation to Prophets and Saints

I AM extremely glad to note that the Madurai Public has so well reacted to the 41 days' *Upanishad Gnana Yagna*, the fifth of its kind that I have been deputed to serve. The discourses that were heard at the Madurai *Yagnasala* during these 41 days (from 14 February to 26 March 1954) are being compiled here into one solid volume to serve two kinds of people; those who have not been able to attend the *Yagna*, and those who attended it. To the former this will be a complete textbook, and to the latter it will serve as notes helping to refresh their memory of what they heard while attending the *Yagna*.

I know that the *Yagna* Committee owes its thanks to thousands of people for their cooperation and divine enthusiasm, but for which the *Yagna* would not have been such an unprecedented success as it was in Madurai. But all the same, mainly the committee should remember in gratitude the Lord Himself who guides us in all our endeavours and doles out real success for all our consistent and persistent efforts.

I must congratulate especially the President of the Committee, Sri P.A.C. Ramaswamy Raja of Rajapalayam, for his diligent and faithful editing of this textbook. I feel confident that all the salient points that were discussed in the *Yagnasala* have been faithfully reported in these pages.

Good or bad, success or failure, complete or incomplete, I consider no work as mine and as such I feel no hesitation in placing this volume as a flower of love and homage at the feet of our reviving Hinduism.

Renascent Hinduism is rising. She has decided to work out her queenly vision of serving humanity all round the globe. The general enthusiasm with which the faithful are now flocking to the study of the *Upanishad* in such continuous discussion groups clearly reveals that the Rishis have started their unseen work of guiding their exhausted children back to their philosophical wealth and spiritual nourishment. The earlier our readers complete their study of these scriptures and reinforce their intellectual knowledge with consistent and intelligent practice, the easier would be the work of our Eternal Mother, the *Sruti*. If you are not enrolling yourself in the army or Hindu missionaries as a member, you will soon be finding yourself a foreigner in your own native land!

Move with the times and know the timeless Time. My grateful and humble regards to all workers and sincere volunteers who have contributed their work to make the *Yagna* such a glorious success; especially, I owe my gratitude to Sri Gopalakrishna Pillai, the Secretary of the Committee, who had been a flawless sevak of Mother *Sruti*.

May the blessings of the Rishis be upon you all.
With Prem and Om,

Thy Own Self,
CHINMAYA

SANDEEPANY SADHANALAYA
POWAI
BOMBAY-72

THE ETERNAL VEDAS

The Hindus believe that "the *Vedas* are Eternal". To the modern sceptic it is certainly a revolting idea, smelling antiquity and thriving only in blind faith. But this opinion can come only to a hasty student who has not scientifically approached this statement, and has not understood the entire depth of its significance.

In its primary meaning *Veda* is not a mere text-book in Sanskrit. It is only in its secondary meaning that it has come to acquire a suggestiveness as "a Bible in four great volumes". They contain the entire Spiritual Knowledge of the Hindus. The word *Veda* comes from a root *Vid* which means 'to know'. Since the text-book deals with Knowledge as its subject matter, the entire literature has come to be named as the *Veda*.

Even today, when we walk into a modern library, we can come across shelves styled as 'Philosophy' or 'Poetry,' 'Electricity' or even as 'Skulls'! These labels do not mean that these shelves are filled with these stuffs! It only means that they contain books dealing with these special subjects. In the day-to-day life it is quite natural for us in our conversations to call the container by the name of the contained. Thus, when the Hindus believe that the *Vedas* are Eternal, they do not mean that their *Palmyrah*-books are indestructible, nor do they feel that their *Bhoja-Patrams* are imperishable!

As a matter of fact the Hindu Philosophers insist and believe that the entire world of matter is finite and that the only permanence in them is the very "principle of their impermanence". As such, when they say "the *Vedas* are Eternal," they mean only that the Knowledge which is the theme of the Vedic-literature is Eternal. That there is a Fourth Plane

of Consciousness which is not generally recognised by man—in this endless preoccupations with the lower, finite, three fields of conscious activities—is an Eternal Truth. It is possible that in a given period of history, this Knowledge may be relatively more veiled from man than in another Golden Era of his culture and spiritualism. This is true even in the field of material Science.

Almost in the same sense in which we say that the *Vedas* are Eternal, we can also say that electricity is eternal. Before the earliest scientist came to discover the existence of electrical energy, electricity was there, veiled from the cognition of man, in every running brook. At a given period in history, mainly by accident but equally well supported by intelligent and conscious self-effort, a series of scientists completed the discovery; the capture and the taming of this wild and ferocious energy for man to employ it in his day-to-day life. It is also possible that in another era, man may come to a state of existence, wherein generations may live in total ignorance of this mightily slave, now so beautifully tanned and so fully trained. But the existence of electricity does not depend upon man's knowledge or ignorance of it; whether he knows it or not, electricity exists as long as the material world exists.

Similarly, the Truth as the Conscious Principle in me and Its all Pervasive, homogenous nature, do not at all depend upon any generation's intellectual cognition and spiritual experience. In a given generation even if the majority has come to experience, this Eternal Unity underlying the pluralistic diversity of the phenomenal world-dream, the *Vedas* thereby do not gain a greater status. The mount Alps is there in Europe, whether you know it or not. The majesty or grandeur, the might or strength of the Niagara Falls do not in any way depend upon our individual personal knowledge of it.

Thus, it is perfectly proper to declare that "the *Vedas* are Eternal". In saying so, true Hindus do not mean to contradict the other Bibles of the world, nor have they any disrespect towards any available Quorans. Also, they do not mean to laugh at the possible future prophets or their texts. All prophets declare only some aspects of the *Vedas* and irrespective of all new editions unchallenged by any of the existing restatements, or unaffected by any disregard shown to it, the *Vedas* eternally ruled the Kingdom of Knowledge, ever and anon, as the sole Pole-Star for all that is noble and pure in human life.

This discovery of the True and the Eternal in the nature of man who is the spiritual being is not an accidental gift-parcel from any God or gods

to a chosen Rishi of that blessed era. It is a birthright of man to know his True Nature and in any century, when there is communal happiness, social security and individual prosperity, generations can be guided to live seeking the nobler aims of life. They too shall come to discover for themselves the fundamentals of the inner world—as readily and as easily as the scientific world of today opens up nature's Pandōras box during periods of war, to let loose more and more painful and treacherous, outrageous and soulless weapons to annihilate itself.

The ways of living and the goal of life, declared by the discoverers were handed down from *Guru* to disciple in the past dim distant days of the known human history, and along the avenues of time they were carried from generation to generation. The torch-bearers of Knowledge maintained the relay efficiently up to the time of Veda Vyasa. In his acute intelligence, for the first time, he detected a growing danger and a possible threat to the continuance of that sacred relay race. He found that the generation had come to live in an age of greater competition. In their preoccupations with life, learning dwindled, because, as we do today, they too had to suffer, perhaps, the consequence of their intemperate living and the natural sorrows of an age of growing population-pressure on land! These are all certainly conjectures, since we have no data to substantiate any positive view. Vedic India is to us a land of no historical reports: it refuses to talk to us.

Whatever be the reason—and certainly there must have been sufficient reasons—Vyasa, the poet-Philosopher, who was at once a far sighted visionary and a close observer of the cultural trends of his times, found sufficient heroism and courage to blast the chains of the then existing tradition of his own times and for the first time, the *Vedic-Mantras* were gathered and recorded in a written language. Till his time every new edition of *Veda* was composed in the mouth of the *Guru* and printed directly on the memory-slabs of the pupil's hearts; *Vyas* brought the first *Bhoja-Patram* and *Palmyrah* editions of the great Knowledge, the theme of the *Vedas*.

In compiling the *Veda-Mantras*, the great Rishi brought in the superhuman genius of his personality and thus, he found the godly courage to edit them properly into the four Vedic text books: The *Rig-Veda*, the *Yajur-Veda*, the *Sama-Veda* and the *Atharvana-Veda*. The systematic thinker in *Vyasa* was not satisfied by merely classifying the entire wealth of the Vedic Knowledge into the four volumes: but in each volume, he brought about, a harmonious rhythm, both in the arrangement and classification of the contents.

Each of the Vedic text-books, in its contents, was again distinctly grouped into three sections. The first section contains, mainly, expressions of wonderment, joy and ecstasy at the chocking visions of beauty in nature's exuberance. The luxurious nature of the Himalayas girdled with the gorgeous Ganges has a captivating might and power, which makes the simple hearts dance in an extravagance of joy. They worshipped or addressed the dignity of the mountain, the majesty of the sunrise, the beauty of the moon, the grandeur of the ocean, the orchestra of the forest, the mission of the rivers, the dynamism of the lightning, the ferocity of the storms... in short, in and through their different songs there runs a uniform chord of an imperceptible cognition of an ever-elusive Power behind the phenomenal happenings, which orders, regulates and maintains a clear harmony amidst the seeming discord in the outer world.

In the second section of the *Vedas* we have the detailed and scientific descriptions and very conclusive instructions as to how the various ritualistic performances are to be undertaken. They have been prescribed as secret methods to invoke the Mighty Power behind nature to bless the devotees' desires into fulfilment. In childhood, man's mental preoccupations are all edged with sheer wonderment and in youth man's bosom is ever-riddled with the unending storms of his desires and he, then, thirsts for their accomplishment in terms of his material success, glory, wealth etc.

Since in its uncontrollable adolescence and youth, the human mind must, necessarily, entertain passions and desires, the Great Rishis found a distinct technique by which these tumultuous stormy passions can be conserved, directed and made to bless the very bosom, which they reached to shelter and rule over. The strict technique of reconstructing the mind and intellect, with the help of the very forces of the enemy powers that reach a human bosom to conquer, is contained in these psychological strategies as detailed in the *Karma Kanda* of the *Vedas*.

The *Karma Kanda* contains two sections as it were, one, dealing with the grosser, exhaustively gives out all the rules of the ritualistic actions and provides prescriptions for the elaborate arrangements for the *Yagnas*, *Yagas*, etc., while the other portion, comparatively subtler, explains the meditations that are part and parcel of the Vedic ritualism. They are called *Upasana Kanda*.

It must be evident now that from the childhood days of wonderment, to the adolescent years of uncontrollable self-deluding desires and

ultimately to the comparatively quieter days of maturity and meditations, the individual grows to be sufficiently balanced in mind and intellect and becomes fit to enter the portals of discriminative self-analysis and intelligent philosophical contemplations. These matured ones are served in the last section of the *Veda* called the *Upanishads*; they are otherwise called the *Aranyakas*; *the text-books that can be with profit studied only in the quiet of the Himalayan Valleys in a mental climate of psychological and intellectual retirement from the stormy outbursts of desires and passions.*

The Upanishads contain the cream of the *Vedas*. They constitute the sacred Bible of the Hindus. Alas! nowadays it is an unknown text-book to the born Hindus! Even the educated erudite pundit-class is for all practical purposes absolutely illiterate in the field of the *Upanishads* because the *Upanishad* study cannot be undertaken merely with the help of the sledge-hammer of language-knowledge, or the pickaxe of word-meanings. Equipped with these instruments, when the grammarians and dictionary-muggers reach the *Upanishads* they hack down the glory out of the Eternal Knowledge and make them as bald as the profit-mongering contractors have done to our sacred Himalayan slopes. When such profit-hunters have depleted the forests of the trees, the very climatic conditions of the country have changed, causing our food problems and this ultimately altered the very face of the Hindu Nation. Indirectly, the cutting axes falling at the roots of the trees in the jungles, have today left marks of furrowed ugliness upon the face of the ever-smiling *Hindu Janata*. In fact, the word-hacking pundits have done, perhaps, more harm to the cultural heritage of the country than the sceptics, who have left, in their dread and disgust, the sacred books intact.

THE UPANISHADS

The very word *Upanishad* has been coined with a purpose to indicate completely some pregnant suggestions. The word is made by combining the suffix *Upa* with the word *Nishad*, *Upa* means near, and *Nishad*, to sit. Thus, the very word indicates that this is the science that one should learn at the feet of the master because, if you read with the help of an encyclopaedia, the true import of the scriptures will be completely lost sight of.

There is yet another interpretation wherein *Upanishad* is a word composed of *Upa + Ni + Shad* where *Upa* means, approaching a *Guru* in

extreme humility, with full faith and an indomitable heroic spirit of seeking *Ni* means *Nischaya* (well ascertained)—that is the Truth declarations of the *Guru* must be without any mental reservations or intellectual dissatisfaction, understood fully beyond all doubts and in their right import; and through meditations when the truth-contents of these volumes are realised, they can pulverise, end or bomb out (*Sad*) the entire ignorance in us and its consequent false values and perceptions. Thus, at all hands *Upanishad* is a volume of knowledge to be rightly understood from a specialist and the student must, through a process of living, come to experience fully, the subjective glance of the God-Consciousness and thereafter become eternally redeemed from all his sense of finitude and mortal limitations.

The scripture is certainly recorded in language, but language is a series of sounds arranged in a particular order, wherein each sound has its own known connotations. Thus when I say 'orange' you certainly understand what it is, and it is not possible for one to mistake it for a 'tomato' — if one knows the language. Thus, language is a systematic series of audible sounds which have a mutually consented sense or meaning for both the speaker and the hearer. The words can be used only in conveying lived experiences which are commonly known to both the parties using the language. Finite experiences alone are the common property of all men; therefore language is available only in expressing in the finite field. In fact, even in the finite world it must be the experience of everyone of us that all of us cannot as fully describe the objects of the gross external world. At the level of experience, language falters, stumbles and lags behind.

And yet, these great Rishis have made a successful attempt—not so much, perhaps, in expressing directly the concept of the Infinite as in conveying in to the intuitive appreciation of at least such students as are prepared to live it. The impossible has been thus made possible by employing the suggestiveness of the words used and not because of the literal word-meaning of the language employed. Therefore, we find that the *Upanishads*, learnt through a dictionary of the language, lands us in a morass of confusions and misunderstandings.

Finite words can never successfully define the Infinite. To define God is to defile Him. The so-called definitions of Truth and the

explanations of that Plane of Consciousness which forms the core of the *Upanishads* are all ideas painted in words, which, when consistently pursued with full concentration and intensity of application, can take the mind of the meditator to such giddy heights or roaring silence wherein he gains an experience of the "true awakening." Thus, even the very terms employed in *Mantras* are not only sign-posts to Truth, but they themselves are the very stepping stones on that ultimate path.

The contents of the *Upanishads* are the esoteric spiritual knowledge recorded for the purpose of reflection and contemplation. Therefore, the deeper a man dives into the significance of the passages during his meditations upon them, the greater the hidden meanings he could discover in them. Mere superficial scholars of the language cannot be fully catered for with such philosophical literature, which are discourses upon Pure Truth challenging the authority and authenticity of the fields of the human mind and intellect. As such, many are the unprepared students who, having reached the Hall of the *Upanishads* had, in pure disgust, run away from it in their incapacity to see any *Truth* in them. This reminds us of the story of an enthusiastic boy who, once upon a time, went to the seashore and returned disappointed; as he could not see the ocean, "because of the waves"!

The study of the *Upanishad* has thus become unpopular in this land of the Rishis not only because of its language, which is today almost foreign to many of us and its method of treatment which is difficult for us, who are a generation that cannot at all appreciate and understand the technique of subjective enquiry, but also because, unlike the study of secular subjects which are being taught in the Universities, *Upanishad* studies cannot be fruitful merely by an academic acquaintance with the texts as such. In the study of the *Vedas*, the reading of the scripture is to be undertaken hand-in-hand with intense subjective discipline and *Abhyas*. Hence it is that we insist on all those who are attending the *Yagna*, living the Four-Point Life of perfect *Brahmacharya*, pure food, clean thoughts and regular divine contemplations.

Just as, in literature, the study of a poet or a dramatist is not successfully undertaken without a study of the history of his times and the personality of the author, so too, the study of the *Upanishads* is not very helpful unless we know something of the physical, mental and

intellectual temperament of the Rishis and the social order of their times. Those were the days when this sacred land of the Rishis, especially the Gangetic valley, was thickly painted with nature's guileless beauty at its best. Perhaps, nowhere else in the world was a patch of scenery so captivating and a climate so salubrious. The generation which came to live, in this extravagance of beauty in the *Aryawartā*, developed therefore, in themselves an irresistible poetic temperament and an imaginative and contemplative nature.

They were a generation of active men capable of intense meditation and acute intellection, having endless powers of physical endurance. They were heroic adventurers walking the Path of Truth, seeking their goal, the Absolute Reality. To them any sacrifice was but a child's play since, as a nation, they had the courage and strength to live up to their own intellectual convictions.

Exhausting inquiry into all the possibilities of science, they came to the logical terminus of all material knowledge. Their seekings brought them to turn inward, and they continued their seekings after the Ultimate, in the depths of their own nature and personality. In complete detachment from life as such, they observed the panorama of happenings in the outer world and evaluated it in terms of the mental and intellectual reactions it created upon the individuals. Thus, the material scientists in them grew in their slow and steady evolution, to be the spiritual seekers—Scientists of Life. What each generation, in its observations, analysis and estimate, came to understand of life, it handed it over intact to the younger generation, and trained the new youths to work afresh in the "Laboratory of Life."

The new generation, thus equipped with the necessary physical, mental and intellectual temperaments, plunged into work, questioning and observing, seeking and analysing, concentrating and meditating and thus peeping into new Realms of Knowledge—not as mere hypothetical theories and ideas, but as vitally lived experiences with joyous dynamism, thrilling with its perfections. Thus, generation after generation, the science grew, and at each master's hand the expressions gained a glow in their inimitable beauty, rhythm and contents. It is these handed-down-experiences of knowledge that crystallised into the briefest statements of voluminous import, which were collected and compiled into books which we call *Upanishads*.

All the *Upanishads* are, therefore, a conversation between a learned man of realised-wisdom living the life of Perfection in Truth and his

disciples, who have reached the feet of the master, seeking the great Goal of Life and demanding his help to reach it. In some of the *Upanishads* the dramatic scene is in all details etched out perfectly, in others it is only hinted at by hasty strokes of artistic finish; and in still others the teacher and the taught are merely hinted at tacitly.

In and through the *Mantras*, however, a serious student of the *Upanishads* can always watch the scene of an aged teacher beaming with benevolence, purity, glory and kindness, anxiously peeping at a young boy of perfect *Brahmacharya* sitting in front of him—excited with doubts, calm in his courage, determined to seek and firm in faith. As the conversation progresses, while removing the doubts of the particular student, the teacher over his shoulders, talks to us upon the meaning of life, the purpose of existence, the diagnosis of our sorrows and the remedy for all our finite weaknesses.

The sceptics often cry that the *Upanishads* are psychological outbursts of some lotus-eaters and Utopian dreamers who have become twisted in their thoughts and corrugated in their ideas because of their unnatural way of living in sacrifice, *tapas* and solitude! In the light of the above details, this conclusion becomes of foul criticism that can suit only the mouth of the ignorant.

There are some who go to the extent of criticising the *Upanishads* as a volume of ideas expressing the "philosophy of idleness" propounded by "professional beggars" in sabotaging the secular programmes of the state. But it is not necessary here to discuss elaborately upon the hollowness of this villainous criticism. We as members of an awakened age, are fully aware that all the secular governments, the world over, are squandering today the tax-payers' money to establish, sustain and conduct scholarly researches in laboratories and libraries by encouraging and recognising the great thinkers of the world through stipends, scholarships, titles and endowments.

A society can sustain and grow in its own civilization, not merely by its physical sweat and labour, but it has also to constantly nurse and nourish its culture with the silent and dynamic activity of the generation's thinkers, who work incessantly in solitude, with extreme detachment from life's sensuousness.

The *Upanishad* that we are to discuss here, is a conversation between a Rishi, called *Pippalada*, and six disciples, who had reached his feet from different provinces, seeking elucidation and clarification of some of their philosophical and intellectual doubts. This conversation is reported for us in the *Upanishadic* portion of the *Atharvana Veda*.

This is a *Brahmana Upanishad*; it means it is a discursive thesis which certainly has an Upanishadic status and authority, but it serves mainly to explain one or the other of the *Mantra Upanishads*. A *Mantra Upanishad* is a scriptural text-book containing the crisp words, which the Master, at moments of his own meditative flights, in sheer flashes of inspiration, received, called the *Mantras*, as though relayed to him from some unknown, far off 'station' of Pure Knowledge. Thus *Mantras* are invariably poetic, and even the very Rishi refuses to claim for himself any authorship for these *Mantras*, since he experiences that they are not a product of his own intellectual or mental effort.

These flashes of Knowledge, as it were, came to his 'vision', meaning perception, while he was not at all in contact with his own mental, and intellectual sheaths. Certainly, the Hindu Philosophers and thinkers adduce a greater authority for these intuitive flashes, which are called *Mantras*, and the *Brahmanas* serve as comparatively elaborate explorations into these giddy heights of super-human and godly intuitions. Thus, you find that *Isavasya-Upanishad* is a *Mantra Upanishad*; and *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* is a *Brahmana* and therefore, *Isa* is more authoritative than the latter. When there are any contradictions between them, the *Mantra* text is always accepted as final.

The *Upanishad*, our text-book, is an explanatory secondary scripture (only in the language of comparative discussions) commenting upon the sacred *Mantra Upanishad* called *Mundaka*.

In the present *Upanishad* the six disciples come to ask six different questions for explanation, and though they may seem to be accidental questions suiting only the individual temperament of the students, they have in their very sequence a message for the Vedantic seeker. The first question deals with the problem of creation of the pluralistic world and therefore, it includes and incorporates in its scope a study of the 'world of objects'. This is mainly to give an edge and a temper to the detachment, *Vairagya*, in the student from the irresistible charm which the painted beauty of the objects exert upon a mortal's heart.

The second and third questions discuss in detail the methods of worship and the initial *Sadhana* necessary for a perfect integration of the seeker's mind and intellect before he steps on to the path of meditation in Vedanta. While advising these *Upasana* methods the *Guru* has guided the students to make a very clear analysis of their body as a seat of office for the five sense-organs of Knowledge, and for the Vital-air *Prana* to function in us.

Having elaborately discussed, thus, in all details the technic of *Upasana*, with the fourth and the fifth questions an exhaustive enquiry is undertaken to study the how and the wherefore of the 'dream and the sleep, with an extra special emphasis upon the exact identity and nature of the 'dreamer' and 'sleeper'.

Lastly, in the sixth question the main problem is taken up to indicate by infinite words the seat of the Self, in all Its infinite glory and Eternal Nature. Here, the words and explanations are so true and full that if a student could faithfully follow up to the fifth, not only academically, but in practice also, certainly, to that fit aspirant the expressions in the sixth discussion can provide at least a clear star-lit-illumination to show him the path to the Temple of his Fulfilment.

We shall now enter the text-book proper and try to understand the true import of the Master's words. Our attempts can be successful only if we are ready to find in ourselves the faith and the sincerity, the earnestness and the spirit of sacrifice, the purity and the self-control as found in all these six students. Let the grace of the Rishis be with us all!! In their blessings may we have the necessary mental stamina, intellectual poise and physical endurance to rip open the veils of the existing negativities in us and discover in ourselves the Truth as expressed in the *Upanishads*, through its noisy word jugglery.

अतीतः पन्थानं तव च महिमा वाङ्मनसयो-
 रतद्वयावृत्या यं चकितमभिधत्ते श्रुतिरपि।
 स कस्य स्तोतव्यः कतिविधगुणः कस्य विषयः
 पदे त्वर्वाचीने पतति न मनः कस्य न वचः।

QUERY I

PRASNOPANISHAD —

No *Upanishad* opens without a prayer portion, technically called *Santi Path*, "peace invocation." The chanting of the invocation, an usual routine insisted upon for both the teacher and the taught, is a reply to the lie that Vedanta is contrary to the Path of Devotion. The highest seers, when they gave their discourses upon the purest Vedanta, to the noblest specimen of seeker, always started their talks with a common prayer conducted by the teacher and the boys.

But the prayer here is an invocation. It is not a humble, meek and impotent beggary, for personal gains from some convenient mighty Power which presides over the helpless destinies of the devotee. It is not a submission. It is not done in the spirit of showing our hat around a crowd of Omnipotent Deities. On the other hand prayer, in its truest sense, is an attempt to invoke the mighty potentialities that are already in us through a process of mental integration. My radio-set is not in any sense of the term, begging the Delhi Station when it is perfectly tuned up to Delhi. The Delhi A.I.R. cannot deny my drawing-room atmosphere its music. Similarly, the Supreme cannot deny us if we are rightly tuning ourselves up to It through the divine process of invocation. Invocation is the demand made by the head; prayer is a meek submission by the heart.

ॐ भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवाः भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः।
 स्थिरैरङ्गैस्तुष्टुवांसस्तनूभिर्व्यशेम देवहितं यदायुः॥
 स्वस्ति न इन्द्रो वृद्धश्रवाः सवस्ति नः पूषा विश्ववेदाः॥
 स्वस्ति नस्तार्क्ष्यो अरिष्टनेमिः स्वस्ति नो बृहस्पतिर्दधातु॥

॥ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः॥

*Om Bhadram Karnebih Srunuyama Devaha
 Bhadram Pasye-Makshabhi-ryatjatraha
 Sthirai-rangaihi-Strushtuvaam-Sastanoobhi-
 Rvyasema Devahitam Yadayuhu
 Swastina Indro Vridhasravaha
 Swastina Poosha Viswa Vedhaha
 Swastina-Starkshyo Arishtanemhi
 Swastino Brihaspatir Dadhatu*

Om

Santhi!

Santhi!

Santhi!

O ye Gods, may we hear with our ears (always) what is auspicious; O worshipful Ones, may we with our eyes see what is auspicious. May we live the entire length of our allotted life hale and hearty, offering our praises (unto Thee). May Indra the ancient and the famous, *Pooshan* (Sun) the all-knowing, the Lord of swift Motion (*Vayu*), who saves us from all harms and *Brihaspati* who protects the spiritual wealth in us—bless us all (with the intellectual strength to understand the scripture and the heroic heart to follow its teachings).

Om

Peace!

Peace!

Peace!

There is an idle and thoughtless criticism generally levelled against Vedanta, not only by the West but also by the Western educated easterners, that Vedanta is merely a religion for the inner world and not for the national, communal or individual work-a-day-world. This

criticism is a laughable advertisement of the critics' own shameless ignorance of the Vedantic philosophy.

The adverse critics of Vedanta have given charming shapes and forms to their arguments. They say that the pictures of all the western saints and sages are a contrast to the pictorial representation of the attitude of the Eastern Buddhas and Shankaras. The Western saint is represented as kneeling down with outstretched hands, eyes wide open, looking out to the Heavens from where, through a crack in the cloud as it were, pours out a beam of grace and benevolence bathing the seeker in an aura of divinity! In contrast to this picture, sits the Indian Master on the banks of the Ganges, on his seat of deep meditation, with his body relaxed, eyes closed, his gaze turned inward seeking Truth and Grace in his own within.

This contrasting pictures give us no indication at all of the philosophy of the East. In fact, if we observe very closely, we shall find that the Indian saint has not closed his eyes entirely. But, unfortunately, the hasty critics could not stand the Vision of Peace that beams out from the face of a Buddha in contemplation or a Siva in Samadhi. The Peace on the face of these masters hoots at the material unrest and the spiritual dissatisfaction felt by the West and the sceptic in his own incompetence turns his face away from the picture were he completely examines it!

The Indian Saint is never represented with fully closed eyes; he has but half-closed his lids. It is called the *Sambhavi Mudra*: With the eyes half-open, even while recognising the world outside, he is not at all unconscious of what is happening in the world within. To play in the outer world of plurality, established on the platform of continuous consciousness of the purity and divinity of the inner soul, is the secret of perfectly living the mortal life as a good-man! Thus, to say that Vedanta has ignored the outer world is a big lie. Here we find that the *Upanishad* opens with an invocation prayer where both the teacher and the taught are crying for the peace, health, tranquility and strength of the whole world, not only the world of the human beings, but the entire world of created beings.

Unless one has got this large-heartedness, love and tolerance, one cannot accommodate in one's bosom the vast idea of Vedanta. Of recent times, many of the local *Pandits* too have come to endorse this criticism against Vedanta because, they, in their hasty restatements of Vedanta, have miserably missed to express the true vitality of the inimitable

philosophy. Perhaps, it was a delicate process of spiritual sabotage by such children of the sad Hindu decadence against the very culture which, in the early days, had come to be accepted, justified and advocated as the Eternal Truth.

Even a hasty analysis of the spirit and meaning of the 'peace invocation' is sufficient to make us understand that Vedanta is but a set of workable values of life for the market-place activities and for the international life, prescribed to eke out for man a maximum peace and joy in life. These are, perhaps, the only values of life upon which the world can be recognised if it has any plan to walk on the Path of Peace and ever strive towards the Temple of Cultural Perfection.

Here, in the prayer of the Vedic Masters, we have the "*Das Capital*" of the Hindu Communism. If each one in the society or a community were to ardently and sincerely wish to meet with only auspiciousness and if each were to act diligently for the same, in such a country, at such an era of its culture, jails would be redundant, slum area unknown, poverty unimaginable, disease an exception. This, in fact, is in direct line with the very basis of the Hindu Culture. The theory of Communism, as available today in the world, seems to be an attempt to bring an equi-distribution of wealth and chances, and the belief is that this would inaugurate a golden age of the maximum happiness to the many. Indeed, it is a courageous experiment. But, human nature being what it is, in this theory, we cannot vouchsafe a permanent and enduring cure for the disease.

There is a vivid and clear distinction between the cultural basis of the world over, and that of the Aryan India. In the other parts of the Globe their culture is based upon a "demand for rights". When individual, communal and national rights are insisted upon it is a demand of the individual or of the community concerned to grab something and to arrogate and possess it. Rights demand an acquisition; it is a taking, a possessing. On the other hand, in India, we find that our Rishis insisted upon the individuals, more and more to demand their chances for performing their duties. Here, duty is the unit of our cultural life and, therefore, the individual in the community or the nation wants to give himself out in a spirit of "duty performed". Unlike in the demand for rights or in life in the spirit of acquisition, in the insistence on duty it is a life wherein the spirit of giving is the hall-mark of its culture.

In fact a materialistic civilisation is built upon the stands of

acquisition and appropriation, while a spiritual culture is a Temple raised upon the rocky foundations of renunciation and sacrifice. The Peace-invocation chanted here clearly brings out this idea. If each member of a given community demands as his duty to see but auspiciousness around and act up to that ideal, certainly, we could, as it were overnight, change the ugly face of our nation today. In a Hindu Nation, consisting of true Hindus, living the divine culture of the Rishis, there should not and will not be the present problems of over-population or famine or ill-health: tuberculosis, leprosy and general insanity both in the leaders and the led. Vedanta is the answer to the problems of the day; it is the only specific remedy for the malady of the age.

To paint the nation of Hindus living Vedanta, as 'impractical men', 'cowards in life', 'deserters from the battle of competitive existence,' a generation of suicides—are all fables created by half-witted *Pundits* who have neither understood Vedanta nor cared to live its values and test its strength. This invocation loudly proclaims that an Age of Vedanta only will breed a generation of heroic hearts and spearheaded intellects, to whom the problems of life can be but a child's play. They lived in a spirit of renunciation and ever acted on the principles of Universal love. That perfect generation of the Vedic period, perfect in every sense of the term, was never blind to the necessities of the physical and the material world. They never complained of life; they never evaded life's problems. Compared with them our present generation of counterfeit men are all wandering trespassers into life.

The Vedic generation of true Hindus wooed life with an appetite and were ever impatient in their insatiable thirst for more and more of it. This is amply evident from their prayers that the Lord of the Universe must bless them to live *the entire span of life allotted to them in all health and perfect vitality*. This prayer addressed, as it is here to *Indra, Vayu, Sun*, etc., should remind us that *Rama, Krishna, Vinayaka* and others are products of a much later age. They are deities that are sanctioned in the *puranic* times. In the Vedic period the Masters recognised only the Great Elements as direct representatives through whom the eternal Reality conveys its expressions of glory in and through the pluralistic world.

No peace invocation is concluded without thrice repeating or invoking peace (*santi*). The three repetitions are, it is explained by the *acharyas*,

addressed to the three groups into which all possible obstacles in the study of the scriptures can be classified. They are: the god-sent (*adhi-daivika*), such as lightning and thunder; the phenomenal (*adhi-bhautika*), such as inertia, lack of faith, insincerity and such others that arise from our own negativities. We too all, every day, open the discourses with a chanting of the invocation and when we come to the thrice repeated peace chorus we shall sincerely pray that our co-operative attempt at the study of the *Upanishad*, for the rest of the days in the *yajna*, may not be obstructed by any force belonging to any of the above mentioned three groups.

ॐ सुकेशा च भारद्वाजः शैब्यश्च सत्यकामः
 सौर्यायणीश्च गार्ग्यः कौसल्यश्चाऽऽ
 श्वलायनो भार्गवो वैदर्भिः कबन्धी
 कात्यायनस्ते हैते ब्रम्हपरा ब्रम्हनिष्ठाः
 परं ब्रम्हान्वेषमाणा एष ह वै
 तत्सर्वं वक्ष्यतीति ते ह समित्पाणयो
 भगवन्तं पिप्लादमुपसन्नाः॥ १ ॥

*Om Sukesaa cha Bhaaradvaajah, Saibyascha Satyakaamah,
 Sauryaayanischa Gaargyah, Kausalyascha/Asvalaayano,
 Bhargavo Vaidarbhih, Kabandhi/Kaatyaayanaste,
 haite brahmaparaa brahmanishtaaha
 Param brahmaanveshamaanaa
 esha ha vai/tatsarvam vakshyati,
 te ha samitpaanayo
 Bhagavantam Pippalaadamupasannaaha.* (1)

Sukesha, son of Bharadavaaja; Satyakaama, son of Sibi; Gaargya, the grandson of Surya, born in the Gargya gotra; son of Asvala; Bhargava of the Vidarbha city, belonging to the Bhrigu gotra; and Kabandhi son of Katya... all of them devoted to Brahman and centred in Brahman, and seeking the highest Brahman, approached the revered Pippalada with fuel in hand, thinking that the rishi would explain everything to them.

The *Prasna Upanishad* opens here with a story of six seekers approaching a great master, Pippalada by name, wanting to get some of their doubts clarified. In Sanskrit literature the great authors always employed four methods in order to bring home to their readers the most important theories of their philosophy. Thus, sometimes they glorified

the noble values of life (*stuti*) sometimes vehemently warned against the opposite, i.e., the false values (*ninda*), at other times elaborately quoted the examples of some noble men of great name and fame who acted up to their ideals (*para-kriti*) and, oftentimes, also employed the 'once-upon-a-time' type of stories which are not at all historical but are meant to encourage the readers to feel sufficient enthusiasm to live the values of the life indicated in the textbook (*purakalpam*).

Here we have the last of the above four techniques employed: that once upon a time six disciples seeking a solution to their problems and doubts in the spiritual world reached the feet of a noble master. By means of the story the *Sruti* is trying to bring home to her readers the essential qualifications of a Vedantic seeker, at the same time hinting at the perfect qualifications of a true teacher. Perhaps, the seers of the *Upanishads* might have foreseen that in the times to come we would have many counterfeit masters sucking up the sap of the society and running the cultural heritage of the country, with hosts of devotees running after the mere external uniform of a saint! Here we are given sufficient signs which can provide a sure touchstone with which the purity and worth of a true *guru* can be unmistakably gauged.

There is a general belief that religion is the last resort of the idiot, the impotent, the ineffectual and the desparado in life. It has come to pass now, in the understanding of the educated, that religion or the pursuit of the spirit is a vocation suitable only to congenital idlers or runaways from life: the superficial observers among the educated Hindus are, in a way, justified in their misunderstanding of the Truth.

Here in this passage we have a clear declaration of who all can be the true seekers. These six seekers were young men who had lived life intensely and fully and, not finding satisfaction even with the best that life could provide, they had started on a pilgrimage, seeking greater wisdom and understanding of life at the feet of some man of perfection. This is indicated here by the terms *brahmapara* and *brahmanishtha* as qualifications of the six seekers. They were already well educated in the lower themes of knowledge or the secular subjects and also well established in the science of spiritualism and worship. They were not mere bookworms but regular practicers in the path of spiritual discipline and religious life.

As they were fairly well established in their practice of Truth in the lower techniques of *upasana* they had gained a great subtlety of mind

and intellect. Such a prepared intellect alone can come to feel an impatience with the lower, and entertain a burning urge to know the Supreme. Till such a burning thirst dawns in the human heart, religion, as a technique of self-purification, advises him to pray in the temple grounds to the forms of mud gods with attractive mythological glories around them.

Pilgrimages, sacrifices, the various programmes of the *bhakti marga*, physical practices such as *asana* and *pranayama*, *tapascharya*, *guru seva*, etc., are all for making the seekers' minds subtle enough to soar over the limited vision of life to the farthest beyond. These six disciples have been indicated as having the necessary inner growth. They have in themselves fulfilled the *paravidya* and have now reached the guru's presence to enquire upon the theme of *aparavidya*, the Science of the Absolute.

This *Upanishad* is a *Brahmana* scripture. *Upanishads* fall under two categories: the *Mantra* and the *Brahmana*. *Mantra Upanishads* contain the crisp and highly volatile material declarations which are the intuitive wisdom-flashes the rishis have gained during their higher flights in meditation. On account of their brevity and super-divine contents it was felt that some amount of elucidation and explanation upon them was necessary. Some other rishis, now and then, gave a comparatively elaborate explanation of the *mantras* which were compiled together and called the *Brahmana Upanishad*. *Prasna* is a *Brahmana Upanishad* explaining the *Mantra Upanishad*, the *Mundaka*.*

'Fuel in hand they approached'.—These few words paint vividly the method of approaching a *brahmanishtha guru*. In the good old days never did the disciple class, knowing as it did the full import of the implications of *brahmavidya*, dare to approach the teacher through hired messengers (postal department) nor did it try to contact the *guru* and clear its doubts through long-distance trunk calls or telegrams. As children they received during their period of education sufficient general instruction in the philosophy of the country which was the very backbone of the Hindu culture and if any one of them felt impatient with any great doubt he eagerly reserved it for his *vanaprastha* days; or, according to the nature of the urgency, even severed his connections with life and ploughed his way to the unknown valleys, seeking a master of wisdom. Of course, such men were rare.

* Here we are having an explanation of the *aparavidya* indicated in the *Mundaka* (I, 1, 4).

When they thus approached the master, they were invariably carrying in their hands a symbol of their self-surrender, the insignia of true discipleship. This symbol was a bundle of *samit*: it may be fuel for the teacher or twigs of the neem tree to serve the master in his morning ablutions. This was a symbol for the master to know that the youngster had reached him in spiritual agony and was seeking a remedy through self-dedicated study and practice.

All these six students had their own individual problems and doubts. All of them felt that the *guru* was fully capable to clear all their doubts; they did not carry to the feet of the *guru* any doubts regarding his perfection.

तान्ह स ऋषिरुवाच भूय एव तपसा
 ब्रह्मचर्येण श्रद्धया संवत्सरं
 संवत्स्यथ यथाकामं प्रश्नान्पृच्छथ
 यदि विज्ञास्यामः सर्वं ह वो वक्ष्याम इति॥ २ ॥

*Taanha sa Rishir uvaacha bhooya eva tapasaa
 brahmacharyena sraddhayaa
 Samvatsaram / samvaisyatha;
 yathakamam prasnaanpricchatha,
 yadi vijnaasyaamah sarvam ha vo vakshyaama iti, (2)*

To them that rishi said, 'Stay here for yet another year with austerity, celibacy and faith; then you may ask as you please your question: and if I know them I will surely explain everything to you'.

As soon as they approached the great rishi as described, they were not allowed to fire off their doubts but, on the other hand, following the traditional law of the study of *brahmavidya* the master told them that if they wanted to spiritually evolve and make the best use of the great teachings they will have to conform to the strict discipline that was unavoidable in Vedanta practice. Therefore he said that they should all live with him in the *ashrama*, strictly following the rules of self-control and faith for one whole year and that then alone would they be given leave to ask the *guru* their doubts.

Certainly, in view of all that we now know about the qualities of disciples, it looks rather unfair that such great aspirants should be forced to live through the discipline, that such enthusiastic seekers should be asked to wait for one whole year. It would be considered as an idle waste of time and career by the modern seekers whose mentality has been polluted by the 'sick hurry' of the age.

These are days when the seekers reach a Pondicherry or a Tiruvannamali, a Rishikesh or a Belur by the morning train to clear their doubts, gain experience and recharge themselves, all perhaps at a nominal payment of a 'crossed cheque' drawn in favour of the mutt on some bank in Australia!.... and the miracle of it all that they expect to catch the home-bound train the very same evening!

The youths of the present age, slowly reviving as they are in India into a spirit of seeking, have sufficient reasons to hope in this method because many are the institutions in the land, today, wherein such quick transactions are going on purely on a basis of an exchange of substantial cheques against effective *mantra deekshas*. Friends, this would help neither the Hindu nation nor the seeker in you, nor the very institutions that thus trade in religion. Such 'mantras' are but callous blackmarketeers in religion.

The *Upanishad*, here, is indicating clearly the absolute necessity for the teacher and the taught to get a kind of spiritual tuning up between them before the finite words of the master could deliver the good to the disciple's intellectual comprehension and through it, ultimately, to his spiritual experience. The story here clearly indicates the importance of austerity, *brahmacharya* and faith. Austerity redeems the personality in the seeker from its inertia; *brahmacharya* relieves his psychological and intellectual debilities; and faith sharpens his intensity and sincerity in meditation. Without these three, life in the spiritual path cannot ever be graced with full and easy success.

The practical mind of the Aryans did not revel in any philosophy merely as an idle pastime wherein the intellect indulged in painting the impossible. They wanted good and substantial results and they were sincere courtiers seeking the hand of life. Therefore, we find in the Hindu scriptures more and more details and insistence on practice. When even such great students, reaching a master's feet after years of practice in ethical, moral and spiritual disciplines, are advised to live under the nose of the teacher 'yet one more year' in observance of these

great values of life, it is indeed an eloquent call to all readers of the scriptures to recognize the importance of these early rules of life.

Brahmacharya is generally understood as the 'vow of celibacy'. But, in fact, it comprehends a meaning deeper than this traditional significance. *Brahmacharya* includes and incorporates in itself a retreat from all sense indulgences; but sex, being the most important urge in man, has come to be overemphasized. In that sense of the term, the vow of celibacy can be maintained only when the seeker avoids the following eight sensual acts; (1) thinking about the opposite sex with evil motives; (2) talking about them; (3) playing with them; (4) looking at them with lusty eyes; (5) talking with them in solitary places; (6) desiring them; (7) trying to obtain them: and (8) actually enjoying them. But, in its larger scope, the term 'celibacy' should mean avoidance of any excessive indulgence in the world of plurality; and these excesses would be crimes against the vow of *brahmachary*.

After the one year's training, the teacher promises that he will try to answer all the doubts of the students. 'If I know'. This is not a declaration of his own intellectual hisitation or of any lack of confidence in himself. It only shows the extreme modesty of the man of wisdom even in the presence of his own disciples. However, the master guarantees them, 'I will surely explain everything to you' A true teacher is he who knows no egoism or vanity. He is invariably meek and always good; even his seeming harshness at times is but the expression of love made eloquent in the only language in which his disciples could appreciate and understand it!

अथ कबन्धी कात्यायन उपेत्य पप्रच्छ ।
भगवन् कुतो ह वा इमाः प्रजाः प्रजायन्त इति॥ ३ ॥

Atha kabandhee Kaatyaaayana upetya paprachha
'Bhagavan,' kuto ha vaa imaah prajaah prajaayanta' iti. (3)

Then Kaatyaaayana Kabandhi approached Pippalada and asked, 'Revered and venerable master, whence are these creatures born?'

The Upanishadic literature is not only unique in its contents but in the very construction of it, in its very literary plan, there is dexterity and a

finish. As we have seen earlier, all *Upanishads* are discussions between a master and his disciples and, as such, there is an inexhaustible wealth of dramatic potentialities in each of them. The scriptural texts as available today have, without a single exception, taken full advantage of this dramatic possibility. Though not a drama in its structure, they have, by the fewest imaginable artistic strokes and dashes, given a beautiful wordpainting to serve as a fit sylvan background for each *mantra* or chapter.

Here, the very sequence in which they have enumerated the necessary disciplines has a message: austerity is mainly for the discipline and control of the body; *brahmacharya* is essentially a discipline of the mind; and faith, necessarily, is an adjustment in the intellectual sheath. On the whole, an integral self-development and personality reconstruction are aimed at here. The word *atha* in the *mantra* means 'after'; and so *after* such a vital and self-controlled physical, mental and intellectual life for one year under the master's direct influence and supervision, the disciples, anxious to know and burning with zeal, sit round the teacher to pursue their spiritual enquiries. One of the disciples now opens up the discussion in the *mantra*. The entire chapter is an answer to this question.*

His question is direct enquiry into the world of objects with a view to discovering the ultimate cause of all the pluralistic phenomena. This is an intellect's useless attempt to understand what it cognizes. The intellect can enquire only through the method of hunting for the cause; to seek the cause of things is the only method of right understanding available for the intellect. Thus, wherever an *effect* is perceived the intellect, in an attempt to understand it, must seek for its *cause*. This causation-hunting preoccupation of the intellect is first of all to be satisfied if we have to redeem our sacred instrument of reasoning and apply it exclusively in spiritual service. Here the student is asking for the source of all creation and, also by implication, he is enquiring the *why* and *wherefore* of the pluralistic world of endless multiplicity.

In this chapter we have an explanation of the process of creation. In different *Upanishads* we find different expositions and theories propounded by different masters to explain the same phenomenon

* The drift of the question, according to Sri Sankara, is to ask as to what fruits would follow when action (*karma*) is pursued without worship (*upasana*), and when a synthesis of action and worship is undertaken.

called creation. This had made the hasty critics conclude that the intuition of the saints and sages is not a reliable and dependable instrument of knowledge since they, among themselves, differ in their explanations of knowledge since they, among themselves, differ in their explanations of the one and the same well-known phenomenon.

If we see the world outside coloured differently from different angles it is clear that the colour is in the medium through which we are observing the same world and not in the object. Similarly if ten different rishis are giving ten different explanations of the same phenomenon the difference in them must be because of the difference in the instruments of their cognition. So, the sceptics reject and the intelligent laymen doubt the reliability as a true source of dependable understanding.

All these heartaches can be avoided if only we understand that the rishis did not bring intuition at all into their explanations of creation. Each master, in giving his theory to the particular set of disciples that happened to reach him, has sometimes even contradicted the theories of another equally great seer. The very licence with which they almost indulge in contradicting each other is the greatest joke we have cut in the Hindu scriptural philosophy. This clearly shows that in spite of their godly, divine and trans-intellectual knowledge and wisdom these great rishis, when they returned to play the part of the mortal, did not become divorced from their sense of humour! Lively in temperament, laughing and joking, they played deftly with the ignorance in their disciples and sought a pleasant way to bring light into their darkness.

Living as he does mainly in the realm of his body, mind and intellect, the student is full of the impressions of the world gained from the objects of his experience during his waking and dreaming hours. His intellect is impatient to find out an explanation for the perceptions of his mind; and all that the intellect can do is to seek an immediate cause. Each time he finds out a cause for the perceived effect, that cause itself comes to demand yet another cause prior to it. This causation-hunting becomes an unending game because even that 'first cause' that you can imagine must have, in its turn, yet another cause! Exhausted and weary with this unending game, a growing human intellect must necessarily come to seek its satisfaction at the feet of the scriptures.

The explanation given in this chapter by rishi Pippalada on this questions is eternally valid. In the following passages this explanation starts. It is a convincing theory that if at all the wheel of creation and

distruction has a place of fixation it is only in the twilight of our own ignorance. This theory certainly confuses the deluded but entertains the wise.

तस्मै स होवाच, प्रजाकामो वै प्रजापतिः
 स तपोऽतप्यत स तपस्तप्त्वा स मिथुनमुत्पादयते।
 रयिं च प्राणं चेत्येतौ मे बहुधा प्रजाः
 करिष्यत इति॥ ४ ॥

*Tasmai sa hovaacha, prajaakaamo vai Prajaapatihi,
 Sa tapotapyata; Sa tapastaptvaa Sa mithunamutpaadayate
 Rayim cha Praanam cheti
 etau me bahudhaa prajaah / karishyata iti.* (4)

He replied, 'Prajapati, the Lord of the Creatures, decided to perform penance and having performed penance, he created a pair — Matter (Rayi) and Energy (Prana), thinking that together they would, between them, produce creatures in many ways'.

From the highest standpoint of the realised teacher's experience the pluralistic world of phenomenon has an existence only so long as the human mind is fluttering in the bosom. Both in the waking and dream states there are perceptions of multiplicity; but the moment we roll up our minds as it were in our fatigue and weariness in playing with the plurality, the multiple world also is screened off from us in our deep sleep.

On waking up, as the mind unfurls itself, the pluralistic worlds of the within and without also spread out their mysterious net of temptations. Therefore, Sankaracharya and other *Advaitins* have come to the sensible conclusion that the world of forms are but shadows thrown out when the mental agitations flutter in front of the Light of light, the Life Spark in us.

Though this is the Ultimate Truth, the student is here revealing himself, with his question, to be one who has come to consider all the multiple objects to be real; or else, this enquiry into their source would not have arisen at all in his bosom. None of us ever dares to enquire into the source of our horns or of our tails!

Identifying himself with his body-mind-intellect equipment, the boy is now a mere child of delusion in his egocentric misconceptions about

himself. As the ego observes a world, the ego must necessarily seek to know how it has been created; here, the intellect is trying to know how the mind is living upon its own perceptions. It is something like the tooth-wheels in the rollers of the cinematograph wondering and enquiring how the film is moving! The movement of the film is but their-own movement; if the wheels stop the film also must stop.

When the intellect asks a question the answer too must be given in its language. Here, in the passage, is an attempt to give a seemingly sufficient intellectual explanation for this intellectual enquiry. The master says that the Lord of Creatures, *Prajapati*, desirous of offsprings, did penance and created a pair; matter and energy. This is not to be construed to mean that a creator sitting beyond the cloud in his own heaven did create the world of you and me in all its endless diversities, and at the end of it pushed us all into it to live out the pains of life.

This would be in fact a ridiculous philosophy, unsatisfying to the intellect, unacceptable to the mind. We have understood that individually we have the projection of the world when the mind unrolls itself and the world is withdrawn again when the mind is rolled up in the restful state of sleep. If this be true of you and me, then the total creation must be because of the Total Mind projecting itself out. The Total Mind includes not only the world of man but also the entire kingdom of creatures who have in them at least a rudimentary mind. The Total Mind concept is indicated by the term *Hiranyagarbha* or *Prajapati*, Subjectively, it is nothing other than the 'creative potential, that is already in us as living human begins.

That which is *Prajapati* in the macrocosm (*samashiti*) is itself the 'creative power' in the microcosm (*vyashti*). Just as we cannot have thoughts without a desire, and without thoughts there cannot be either a mind or a world or perceptions, desire is the very motive force which faithfully induces the 'powers of the creative urge' to manifest. This idea is clearly brought out in the description given in this passage which is an attempt to represent this subjective idea objectively. The Creator, the Total Mind, first of all gets shot with the desire that he must beget out of himself the many — his own offsprings. When this desire is felt the Total Mind is thinking as to how He will go about with the business of fulfilling it. This thinking, planning, remembering, etc, are together indicated here as *tapas*.

In Vedanta we do not believe that creation started at any known point in time; to accept so will be illogical and unsatisfactory to any awakened thinker. To say that creation started at a definite known date (say, September 21) would be lie inasmuch as that given date will have a meaning only with reference to its immediate past moment; that is with reference to the 20th of September alone can the 21st of September have any sense or meaning.

Again, if a fixed point in time is accepted as the 'creation hour' we will have to say, 'time was when creation was not', which would be absurd since *time* itself is a created perishable concept. Avoiding these logical contradictions, in a true philosophy, the only way in which we can express the same idea would be to state that creation started at the O-second, O-minute, O-date, O-week, O-month, O-year. The same idea is more beautifully and scientifically put when we say, 'the creation is beginningless (*anadi*).

If it is beginningless how are we to explain the creation that we see around us? Vedanta explains that after each *pralaya* or deluge (dissolution), the Cosmic Mind feels a deep desire to project itself out into its own world of multiplicity and deliberates on how best it can accomplish its plan of fulfilling its own desire. It remembers how the process of creation had come about after the previous *pralaya* and what should be the pattern of the world to be created which must be the fittest arena wherein all the ego-centres (*jiva*) can play out their mental and intellectual impressions (*vasanas*).

Thus we find how the Creator is really helpless, and how He will have to create a world according to the type of *vasanas* that are waiting to play themselves out in favourable fields.

To the peon working in the Collector's office, the Collector Sahib is an omnipotent force having freedom and all licence. But when we visit the Sahib at his chair we find that he is shackled by a thousand existing laws of conduct and administration, and his actions are directly and immediately controlled by the demands of the social structure as well as the ever changing circumstances in the community, similarly, the Creator or the Total Mind is not in any sense of the term absolutely free to create as He likes nor can He change the rhythm of nature to suit his momentary fancy.

Subjectively, if we observe and try to understand what happens in us daily, this can become much more clear to us. During the state of the

subjective *pralaya* of our world (that is, during our sleep) each of us is but a bundle of our own *vasanas*. A criminal and a saint may be sleeping in two adjacent rooms of a *dharmasala*; While sleeping both of them are equally innocent of any of their special traits of saintliness or sinning. But the moment they start waking up they are whipped up by their desires to create their own worlds and enjoy therein; they both must necessarily think in terms of their own *vasanas*. The sinner is not free to create a world of divine values and godly joys, similarly the saint cannot create for himself a world of criminal motives, vulgar thoughts and sinful acts. Both of them have the same great dynamic creative power in themselves but in expressing it they are certainly ordered by their own previous mental impressions. If this idea is understood it is not at all difficult to comprehend the Cosmic Mind and the part it plays in creating the cosmos.

'He created a pair—the matter and the energy.' It is explained here how with the hope of fulfilling His great desire to create a multiple world, the Cosmic Mind, at first, in any given cycle of creation, comes to function in the same field, at once, as the two great factors called *matter* and *energy*. *Matter*, as the outer envelopments, would constitute the mass and the girth in beings and things while *energy is the vitality or dynamism that makes the world vibrate with activity*.

Fortunately for us, this idea has become very easy to apprehend since we are the children of the atomic age. 'Energy in motion is matter,' is the declaration from the laboratory of the modern scientist. The ancient *rishis* seem to have scribbled in their dilapidated palmyrah textbooks the very same truth about *matter* which the modern world, with all its equipments and self-congratulatory enthusiasm, has but recently come to discover...and, alas! it was immediately employed to erase a portion of their own fellow beings.

From the standpoint of Vedanta, the *prana* is not, strictly speaking, to be defined as *energy* as it is known to us and defined by our professional men of material wisdom, and yet, even this compromise helps us a lot to understand its concept, at least to a slight degree.

Thus, the Creator, the 'creative energy' in us, anxious to bring forth offspring, thought and planned and at last executed the thoughts by first of all becoming, himself, his own two aspects, such as *energy (prana)* and *matter (rayi)*. The relationship between them is that of between the fiddle and its melody: without the fiddle the melody is impossible but a

fiddle in itself is only a scrap in the attic, as no music can be coaxed out of it. Similarly, *matter* is the equipment and *energy* is the music that can be tickled out of *matter*. Songful *matter* is life. The Cosmic Mind hoped that these two would, among themselves, multiply into the many.

In this passage there is a very beautiful backgroundpicture depicting how the tragedy of self-projection and the consequent sorrows have come to us. First, there is the rise of a desire which generates thoughts. Thoughts pursued for a long time feed themselves on memories and blaze up into self-projection and, ultimately, it all ends in the creation of the necessary 'field of experiencing' called *loka*, the world.

The tragedy does not end there. The denouncement is reached only when, after the creation, the individual mind lingers on with hopes of harvesting the fruits of its own creation. The fall is complete when one reaches this state of expectation, which is the very verge of all our falls. Step by step, the peace and tranquility of the quiet repose is disturbed and through different layers of landings, such as desire, thought and activity, the ego-centre ultimately comes to suffer the moanful sorrows among the filth of its own hopes and the worms of its own endless expectations.

आदित्यो ह वै प्राणो रयिरेव चन्द्रमा,
रयिर्वा एतत्सर्वं यन्मूर्तं चामूर्तं च
तस्मान्मूर्तिरेव रयिः॥ ५ ॥

*Aadityo ha vai Praano, Rayireva Chandramaa,
Rayirvaa etatsarvam yanmoortam chaamoortamcha
Tasmaanmoortireva Rayihi.*

The Sun is, verily, life and the Moon is the matter, all that have form and all that is formless is matter and therefore form is indeed matter.

You are again cautioned not to interpret the words *matter* and *energy* in the light of their laboratory definitions in the world of the material sciences. *Matter* and *energy* are certainly indicated through their definitions in physics but, philosophically viewed, what we mean by the terms *prana* and *rayi* are something subtler and deeper and more comprehensive than *matter* and *energy* as understood by the scientists.

Prana means *energy* which makes *matter* exist and function as though vibrant with vitality. Modern science has given sufficient data not to disbelieve these declarations: for, they say that the Sun is the source of all energy in this universe. Long before the modern scientists had come to this conclusion, here is the timeless Veda, hoary in its antiquity, roaring the same wisdom with a conviction that smacks of the confidence of a perception.

If the Sun is thus the source of all energy and life, the Moon is, we are told, a dead planet which but reflects the Sun's light. Naturally, the rishis could not have chosen a better deity to preside over the world of *matter* which, though without dynamism of its own, is a fit medium for *energy* or *vitality* to manifest through. Thus the rishis declared, '*Ravi is nothing other than the Moon.*'

In the beginning, we have already indicated that the term *matter* is not to be understood in its limited meaning which the accepted definition of the scientist indicates, but that in the mouth of the rishis it gathers a greater import and an ampler implication.

Accordingly, the rishi here explains that *matter* does not mean only those which have form but even those that have no form are also members of this group. In short, according to the rishis, even the formless thoughts and ideas are nothing but *matter*. This will be clear from an experiment with fasting, try, if you like. Forty-one days, on a diet of one ounce of water every day, would clearly reveal to you that your thoughts and ideas are nothing but the subtle by-products in the manufacture of the body from the well-known raw material, food. The more we are famished the lesser will be the mental throubbings, until at last they almost fall off to a minimum; later on, as we start taking in small quantities of food, the mind again takes up the thought strings to sob out the songs of its frenzy and restlessness. The rishis are, therefore, perfectly right in declaring that in their definition of *matter* all our thoughts and ideas are also incorporated.

'*Therefore form is indeed matter.*' The logic behind this may not be visible to a superficial reader but it becomes very revealing when we understand that the inner world of mind and intellect—which are nothing other than feelings, thoughts and ideas—is a product of our impressions, created in us because of the world of forms outside. The links in a chain made out of gold are all nothing but gold; thoughts and ideas—and therefore, the mind and intellect—created and sustained because of the world of objects, cannot therefore be anything other than the outer world.

Forms constitute *matter*. The formless world is controlled, regulated, sustained and governed by the outer world of forms; therefore, the formless in our inner world is nothing other than the form world outside—'Form is indeed matter.'

The passage under discussion here declares that the Sun is the 'source of all energy' or the 'energy aspect' met with both in the world of forms outside and the formless world within. The moon is the presiding deity of the *matter* without and the *matter* within. It is interesting to note in this connection how in the *Yoga Sastra* it is declared by all concerned that the presiding deity of the mind is the Moon; *Mati* is a name for the mind* as well as for the Moon. Thus, the life, both without and within, is but a play of the Sun and the Moon, these terms being used in their full philosophical import.

All *matter* is the Moon; all *energy* is the Sun. *Prajapati* in himself expresses both *matter* and *energy*. The equation then solves itself to indicate that *Prajapati* himself, as the Sun and the Moon, is playing in the world as *matter* and *energy*, and thus has himself become everything else in us except the *Atman*! A little sincere meditation upon these ideas should reveal to everyone what the *Sruti* exactly wants us to understand, but which she has not openly said. This very policy of secretiveness of the *Sruti* text prescribes the technique of *Vedanta Sadhana*. Every passage that comes out of the seers is to be meditated upon and in an incomparable way these passages provide the material for a 'grossly subtle field for meditation.'

अथाऽऽदित्य उदयन्यत्रार्चो दिशं प्रविशति
 तेन प्राच्यान्प्राणान्रश्मिषु सनिधत्ते।
 यदक्षिणां यत्प्रतीर्चो यदुदीर्चो यदधो यदूर्ध्वं
 यदन्तरा दिशो यत्सर्वं प्रकाशयति
 तेन सर्वान्प्राणान्रश्मिषु सनिधत्ते। ६ ॥

*Athaaditya udayanyat praacheem disam pravisati,
 Tena praachyaan praanaan rasmishu sannidhatte.
 yaddakshinaam, yatprateecheem, yadudeecheem*

* In Vedanta mind and intellect are the two aspects of the same stuff and so *Mati* is a name for mind also, although its dictionary meaning is 'intellect'.

*yadadho yadoordhavum/yadantara diso,
yatsarvam prakaasayati,
Tena sarvaan praanaan rasmishu sannidhatte.*

(6)

Now the Sun, rising, goes towards the East and he embraces with his ray all *pranas* in the East. When he lights up the Southern, the Western, the Northern quarters, the above, the below and the intermediary quarters and the all, by that he thrills with his rays all creatures.

We have noticed in the introduction to this *Upanishad* that it is the peculiar glory of a true Aryan heart that it cannot keep quiet when beauty and glory revel around. This is nowhere so particularly evident as in the heritage of our culture that has come down to us through its art and literature. The lavishness of beauty in the ancient architecture is a marvel for the hasty 'furniture makers' of the day. From the extravagance of art in carving a whole mountain into a shapely wonder temple it seems that there is no other race yet born in the kingdom of man which has exhibited with such expressiveness the flow of spiritual rhythm in life and nature's beauty around life.

In literature also we find no poet who can resist the temptation to pause for a moment, however tense the situation be, to cage in the beauty of the Gangetic plains into the web of his melodious words. Here in the *Upanishad* also, we often find that even the man of renunciation in the *rishi* could not successfully stand up against and resist the temptation to dance in revelry at the vision of beauty. Imagination runs into ecstasy when they think in terms of beauty.

Here, in the briefest of the texts on philosophy that exist in the world—in the *Upanishads*— We find a distinct quality and texture of imagination unparalleled anywhere else. We have in this *Brahmana* a description of how the Sun is really the presiding deity of the *prana* or vitality by the touch of which a lifeless bundle of carbon, phosphorus, silicon, nitrogen, etc., which constitute the body, gets thrilled into intelligent activity.

As the Sun rises in the east, the *Brahmana* goes on explaining, how quickly his rays gather the whole world at all its quarters into the warm embrace of a cheerful awakening and goad the living world into activity. Just as a musician alone can enjoy to the full the subtleties of a music physically sung, so too, unless the reader has sufficient imaginative power, he cannot come to enjoy or appreciate the beauty of

any piece of literary work sweetened with such an excess of the subtlest imagination.

In order to appreciate this passage you must in your imagination transport yourself to the orb of the Sun. From there if you view the world you will find how portions of this revolving globe slowly emerge out of darkness into the beam of sunlight and how, portion by portion, the western side moves off to disappear into the shroud of darkness. The emerging portion of the globe, basking in the sunlight, will be seen to get up into activity while the living creatures on that portion of the globe which is returning to darkness, slowly and steadily retire into inactivity and sleep.

With reference to the world we may say; thus, the living creatures at night—when they are away from the embrace of the Sun (the *prana*)—go into the 'lap of the Moon' where they become identified with *matter* and, laden with sleep, roll in stupor, inertia and sloth. While, on the other hand, at the eastern end of the globe, portions, that are emerging out into the light of the Sun, as though at the touch of a magic wand, throw off their lethargy and get up into activity with *energy*.

From this picture the rishi wants us to understand that it is not a baseless convenient supposition to say that the Sun is the 'representative of the *pranas*' and the Moon the 'deity of *matter*'. At the touch of each, the living creatures behave differently. Even in the plant life and animal life we find that they are still and look sleepy in the moonlight. Every man would like to enjoy the moonlight by merely sitting on the sands of the seashore or by cuddling himself in his chair on his terrace. But at dawn his enjoyment of the sunrise is not in merely sitting but in exploding into vigorous activity either in calisthenics performed on the terrace or by going out for a long brisk walk! No literature in the world can beat such passages in thought, diction or style and in bringing out such glorious ideas in so few words, sounding almost as innocent prattling.

स एष वैश्वानरो विश्वरूपः प्राणोऽङ्गिरुदयते।
तदैतदृचाभ्युक्तम्॥ ७ ॥

*Sa esha Vaisvaanaro Visvaroopah
Praanognirudayate,
Tadaitadrichaabhyuktam:*

(7)

He is the Vaisvaanara the sum total of all living beings, assuming all forms. *Prana* is the fire that rises every day. This has been said in the following mantra of the Rig Veda also.

The incomparable expressions of the previous *Brahmana* have clearly shown to us the exact sense in which the seers identified the *prana* and *Sun* together. In the *Brahmana* the rishi is hinting at the implications of the expressions of the previous statement. Here it is said that the Sun is the sum-total of all waking-state egos in the world. But for the Sun the activities of the waking-state world would not have taken place, for, the waking state implies experiences, thoughts and activities. The Sun, we have found, with the magic touch of his rays, makes the whole world thrilled with activities. Thus the Sun is considered as the sum-total of the world's waking-state egos.

This macrocosmic idea is generally a great hurdle for the students of Vedanta, especially when they directly approach the textbook which they had purchased at the city bookstalls! The vanity of a grammarian is no passport to the secret caves of philosophy. The macrocosmic concept can be more easily understood by the modern educationist from its analogy in politics: the modern man is a creature of the politics of his time. The concept of the State in a country is but a concept of the sum of the microcosmic powers of the entire population of that country. In fact, if you analyse what the 'State' is, you will find that you yourself is that 'State'. Each one of us constitutes the 'State' and in our totality, having become this powerful 'State', it wields a mighty strength which can thereafter threaten the very individuals who constitute it.

Similarly, the total gross-body consciousness, which individually we have in each one of us in our waking state, is called *Vaisvanara*. In the waking state, the spiritual truth in us identifying itself with our body feels an egocentric personality which is called *Viswa*; when the Truth identifies itself with the total gross bodies of the total waking state it is called *Virat*. The sun is *Sarvajeevaatmaka*.

Viswarupa means assuming all forms. Here this means only that the Sun with its light-principle is the cause for the perception of all forms seen by the eye; the eye is the instrument of recognising colours and shapes. It can function and perceive its objects only in a beam of light. The Sun is the source of the entire light energy; as such, to say that the Sun himself assumes all forms is but justifiable in a philosophy wedded to poetry.

We have already found how the touch of sunlight tickles life to giggle out into activity; where there is life, there is warmth. Coldness is the nature of death, the language of *matter*; body warmth is the flag of the life living in it.

However great a rishi may be, the Hindus do not accept his words merely because they come from a sage. No original idea of the intellect has the same force of authority as the declarations of the intuition. Therefore, the student raises his eyebrows questioning rishi Pippalada and demanding his authority to establish his declarations.

Watching the rising doubt in the mind of the student, Pippalada adds in the same breath as it were, '*This has also been said in the following mantra in Rig Veda.*' A *Brahmana Upanishad* is an explanatory scripture rather than a textbook of declarations. In order to give its expositions an authority, a *Brahmana* has to quote the '*Mantra portions of the Veda.*' Accordingly, we find in all chapters *matras* quoted to support the statements in this *Upanishad*. Pippalada is quoting here the *Rig-Veda mantra* to show how therein also the same idea is echoed.

विश्वरूपं हरिणं जातवेदसं परायणं ज्योतिरेकं तपन्तम्।
सहस्ररश्मिः शतधा वर्तमानः प्राणः प्रजानामुदयत्येष सूर्यः॥ ८ ॥

*Visvaroopam harinam jaatavedasam,
paraayanam jyotirekam tapantam.
Sahasrarasmih satadhaa vartamaanah
praanah prajaanaamudayatyesha Sooryah.*

(8)

The knowers understand 'that'—which is of all forms, the resplendent, the highest goal, the one light, the heat giver—to be the thousand-rayed Sun who exists in hundred forms as the life of all creatures.

Here, in this *Rig-Veda mantra*, there is the description of the rising Sun with sufficient suggestions to show the Sun to be of the nature of the Creator (*Prajapati*). The translation makes the significance quite clear and, in view of our exhaustive treatment of all the topics in the last *Brahmana* in full detail, here in this *mantra* we need not discuss these terms again.

The one new idea added in this *Rig-Veda mantra* is that this is the subjective experience of those who have meditated for long with

sufficient intensity upon the nature of the Sun (*Surya*) in his macrocosmic and microcosmic aspects of existence and function. It is clearly shown that this idea is not a wild fantasy spun out of somebody's dream but that we can experience the truth of this if we would, with sincerity, make an attempt to realise it.

In this *mantra* there is also a direct indication that the Sun is not the physical orb of light and energy which is recognised by the astronomers and the investigators in geography, but is meant here as the vitality which expresses itself through matter while parading in the form of the well known activities which are life's own expressions. As a source of all such activities the Sun is considered here as the 'life of all creatures'.

संवत्सरो वै प्रजापतिस्तस्यायने दक्षिणं चोत्तरं च।
 तद्ये ह वै तदिष्टापूर्ते कृतमित्युपासते।
 ते चान्द्रमसमेव लोकमभिजयन्ते त एव पुनरावर्तन्ते,
 तस्मादेते ऋषयः प्रजाकामा दक्षिणं प्रतिपद्यन्ते।
 एष ह वै रयिर्यः पितृयाणः॥ ९॥

*Samvatsaro vai Prajaapatih
 tasyaayane dakshinam chottaram cha
 Tadye ha vai tadishtaapoorte kritamityupaasate.
 Te chaandramasameva lokamabhijayante
 Ta eva punaraavartante.
 Tasmaadete Rishayah prajaakaamaa
 dakshinam pratipadyante.
 Esha ha vai Rayiryah pitryaanah*

(9)

The year is indeed *Prajapati*. And there are two paths: the Southern and the Northern. Those who follow the 'Path of Karma' alone, by the performance of sacrificial and pious acts, obtain only the 'world of the Moon' and certainly they do return. Therefore, those sages who desire offspring take the Southern route. The *matter (rayi)* is verily the 'Path of the Forefathers'.

So far we had discussions which conveyed to us that the Creator himself has become *energy* and *matter*— the Sun and the Moon—and that with reference to the Sun and the moon we, the inhabitants of this globe, calculate our time, and so *Prajapati* himself is the year. Out of a piece of silver, if we make small rings, certainly the rings are all

nothing but silver, and if we string them together into a chain, the chain again should be nothing but silver. Similarly, *Prajapati*, becomes the Sun and the Moon and in terms of them we calculate time as years, months and days; and, naturally, it is but meet to accept all these divisions and sub-divisions as nothing other than *Prajapati*.

It water is placed in twenty different bottles of different colours and shapes, with reference to the container we may describe the samples of water to be the blue-water, the tall-water, the bulky-water, the round-water, the square-water, etc. But if anybody were to say that all these are nothing but water he can prove that truth scientifically only when he shows that the contents of the bottles are all nothing but H_2O .

Similarly here, when the *Sastra* says that *Prajapati* is nothing but the Sun + the Moon, and when it continues to show that years are nothing other than the *Prajapati*, then it must necessarily show us that the year is nothing other than the Sun + the Moon. An attempt is made here to show that Time is nothing but their two paths.

In the traditional language of the *Upanishads* the departed soul is supposed to continue its upward pilgrimage to perfection along two routes distinguished from each other as the Southern and the Northern paths. There is, in fact, no grand trunk road on which your Pointiac car or Indra's car can wait to bundle you away along the path. After death there is nothing in you to bundle up! When the subtle body is released from the gross body it is but a pack of winged thoughts and ideas, and they should necessarily take to their own flights.

Here, the *Brahmana* is indicating what exactly would be the direction of this flight. A pilot directs his plane in the air for ten minutes at forty-five degrees to north and for another equal interval of time drives the plane again forty-five degrees to south. Naturally, with reference to the starting point, the plane would be, at the end of its flight, reaching only a point due west; for, the flight would be the resultant of the right and the left wing dips. Similarly, the direction in which the thoughts would fly after death would be a resultant of the different thoughts which the soul consciously entertained and maintained while it has the body equipment.

The entire possibilities of human actions have been divided mainly into two groups; the good and the bad; the good are such thoughts by entertaining which the individual evolves, while the bad thoughts are such that because of their intentions they gravitate as it were to pull the

entity towards devolution. We are now discussing the routes in which evolutionary pilgrimages can be undertaken by the subtle body of individuals who had performed self-evolving actions and therefore were essentially the good.

Vedanta, being thoroughly scientific, has again systematically divided all possible good actions—which can definitely contribute to the evolution in man into two groups: *ishtam* and *poortam*. *Ishtam* comprises acts which have been sanctioned by the scriptural textbooks (*Srutis*) and *poortam* are the noble acts of kindness and charity sanctioned by other subsidiary textbooks of *dharma* (*Srutis*).

Ishtam includes all Vedic rituals, self-control, truthfulness, the study of Veda, disseminating the Vedic knowledge to deserving aspirants, serving the unexpected guests and tending continuously the sacred fire in the house. And *poortam* includes constructing village tanks, public wells and bathing ghats, maintenance or reconstruction or construction of temples, feeding the poor, and opening new roads, parks *dharma-salas*, watersheds, etc.

If you analyse this classification and understand them from the level of the mental condition of the devotees you will certainly understand how and why they follow two different paths in their evolutionary progress.

Those who are performing *ishtam* are necessarily men of high culture and discriminating capacities, with a great amount of aversion for sensuous desires. They are mainly men of meditation demanding of life nothing more than a greater mental and intellectual perfection, and they steer their boats of life towards the Pole-star of Eternal Truth. Naturally, when they depart from here, their minds, all the time meditating upon the 'energy aspect' of life, identify themselves with the Sun path and reach the Sun (*prana or energy*) and cross it to go beyond.

While, on the other hand, those who are performing *poortam* are no doubt cultured and pure members of the society, but they are to a large extent victims of their own deep desires for wealth or children or glory and position in life. In order to 'fulfil' their own desires they try to 'fulfil' the small desires of a large number of people through *poortam*; thereby they expect that they would be blessed by these satisfied members of the society and that ultimately they would also get their own desires fulfilled (*poornam*).

Thus, though they were living, all through their lifetime, the noble life of charity, purity benevolence, etc. there was always an undercurrent of desire gurgling deep within their apparently noble hearts. Their demand was mainly for the acquisition of more and more *matter*. Naturally, when they depart from here they go to the world of *matter*, the Moon. Thus, following the 'Southern route' they reach the Moon, and crossing it, go to that plane of consciousness called technically as the *pitrloka*, the 'world of the manes'. There they enjoy supersensuous objects with supersensitive apparatus, in supersensuous joys of material possessions and glories.

Your holiday at the Carlton Hotel in Simla would be certainly controlled by your purse. Similarly, your sojourn in the world of the manes would be directly proportional to the amount of merits acquired while living here. When you feel your purse getting lighter you must leave the joys of the Carlton for the drudgery of the office. Similarly here, when the merits (*punya*) have been 'eaten up' in terms of experiences enjoyed, one will have to come back to this world again to earn the right to live in such joys.

A lot of misunderstanding exists about the 'paths' among the modern educated class; nobody can save them from their suspicions and doubts, since nothing similar to these has been even thought of by the West so far. To say that we must discard these ideas because there is nothing similar to them in Western psychology would be an unforgivable folly since we are observing, especially during the last hundred years, that every new discovery made in the West has been but a restatement of some aspect or aspects of what has long been there in our old *Sastras*.

So far we can confidently say that there has been no discovery in science in the West which is not acceptable to Vedanta and which is not in unison with the statements in the Vedas. All the Western scientific discoveries have been thus corroborated expressly or tacitly in the Vedic texts. This being the case, we will have to accept things said in our Vedas which have *not yet* been directly corroborated by the Western sciences. The intelligent conclusion that we should draw from the above, therefore, must be that these Vedic declarations are all possibilities that are still waiting for the Western laboratories to discover for themselves.

In short, 'as we think so we become.' All through life when an individual is trying to transcend the body, mind and intellect, by living sincerely a life of renunciation and detachment, in purity and meditation,

he comes to experience the glory of the spirit. While, on the other hand, those who are employing their thoughts to gain in life and straining their capacities to identify themselves with the *matter*, come to gain, according to their own demands, the kingdom of *matter* as represented by the Moon or the *pitrloka*. 'As you think so you become'; our life is our own responsibility, to make or to mar. Vedanta not only makes man a God but also avers that this great privilege has got its own severe responsibilities, and that unless one is ready to take up the responsibilities, the corresponding joys of perfection and the dignity of Godhead shall not be his to live.

अथोत्तरेण तपसा ब्रह्मचर्येण श्रद्धया
 विद्ययाऽऽत्मानमन्विष्याऽऽ दित्यमभिजयन्तेः
 एतद्धै प्राणानामायतनमेतदमृतमभयमेतत्परा-
 यणमेतस्मान्न पुनरावर्तन्त इत्येष निरोधस्तदेष श्लोकः॥ १० ॥

*Athottarena tapasaa, brahmacharyena sraddhayaa,
 Vidaya-aatmanam-anvishya-adityam-abhijayante,
 etadvai Praanaanaam-aayatanam, etadamritam-
 abhayam, etatparaayanam, 'etasmaanna
 punaraavartanta ityesha nirdhah.*

Tadesha slokah:

(10)

But those who have sought the Atman by penance, celibacy, faith and knowledge, gain the Sun travelling through the Northern route. This is the home (the goal) of all living creatures, the Immortal, the Fearless. This is the highest goal. From there they do not return, for, this is the end. for this, there is a *mantra*.

In this *Brahmana* the master is trying to point out to us the path that is taken by such people who have lived their life performing *Ishtam*. Already, we have found that *ishtam* is that group of noble acts which are undertaken by men of renunciation and discrimination who have no more charm or attraction for the 'world of *matter*'. Seeking nothing but the Self, they pursue the path pointed out by the *Upanishads* and thus, after their death, they come to identify themselves with the Sun. Travelling the 'Northern route' and crossing the Sun they reach the *Brahma loka*.

There is no return from the *Brahma loka*. In due time the individual-ego-centre gains complete redemption through *dhyana*

there. This is called progressive liberation (*Krama mukti*). The details of these two paths have already been so exhaustively discussed in the previous *Brahmana* that we need not repeat them here.

However, we may point out here that the attempt of the rishi, in the latter half of the last section and in the entire *Brahmana* now under discussion, is to point out to us that the year is indeed *Prajapati*, and as such the Sun aspect and the Moon aspect in the year are shown as the two paths which, in time, everyone has to follow after death.

These ideas are not at all an original contribution of the rishi towards the wealth of Vedantic thought. He is now quoting a Vedic verse to show how the idea he has expounded so far has already the full sanction of the Vedic seers. Throughout the *Upanishad* we often find Vedic passages quoted in support of its statements; it has to be so, it being only a *Brahmana Upanishad*

पञ्चपादं पितरं द्वादशाकृतिं दिव आहुः परे अर्धे पुरीषिणम्।
अथेमे अन्य उ परे विचक्षणं सप्तचक्रे षडर आहुरर्पितमिती। ११ ॥

*Panchapaadam pitaram dvaadasaakritim diva aahuh,
pare ardhe pureeshinam.*

*Atheme anya u pare vichakshanam saptachakre
Shadara aahur-arpitam-iti.*

(11)

The sages say that the Lord of Rain, the father, having five feet and twelve forms, is seated in a place higher than the atmosphere. Others call him the all-wise, the one upon whom, like a chariot drawn by seven horses running on a wheel with six spokes, the whole world is founded.

As promised, Pippalada is quoting here the *Rig-Veda mantra* which is a glorification of the Sun god, considered as the Lord of Time. The translation of the *mantra* is a very impressive example of the style in the Vedas and the incapacity of the English language to bear the burden of Sanskrit. It is such translation, though direct, that brings out poignantly an ugliness which makes its readers laugh at the literature.

Some fruits would look very ugly; if only we know how to reach their succulent core! Similarly, if we could keep ourselves away from our own mental prejudices and reach the courtyard of the *Upanishad* to woo and win her grace, certainly we too can come to understand and

discover the gorgeous beauty that lies beneath its seemingly empty words.

The first, half of the *mantra* gives us a beautiful pen picture of time objectified as a benevolent lord. This sacred Lord of Time, sitting or occupying a place above the atmosphere, is conceived as having five limbs for his locomotion in the five seasons. Though in India we generally accept six seasons, here, considering the *Hemanta* and *Sisira* together as one, the Vedic *mantra* explains that the five seasons are the five feet of the Lord of Time. To conceive time as a five-footed benevolent master moving along the roof of the world? slowly and steadily from season to season is a lovely picture of immeasurable poetic charm, and has an appeal which is at once fascinating and inspiring.

This Lord of Time is described as having twelve different forms or attitudes which are expressed differently one by one during the twelve months of the year. This *mantra* is a glorification of Lord Sun, who being the Lord of Time, is also described as the Giver of Rain. The *Veda* says that this is the way in which the Sun, the Lord of Time, has been described by one set of seers while there is another group of wise men who glorify the Sun in a different style altogether.

According to the second version, the Sun moves as though established in a car drawn by seven horses, meaning the seven colours of sunlight. Spectroscopy, therefore, seems to be not an original discovery of the West but an intelligent plagiarism from the wisdom of the seers! The idea that sunlight is constituted of seven colours seems to have been so familiar in the days of the *Vedas* that they could easily use it in the language of a metaphor and every intelligent reader would easily follow it.

The chariot is described as moving on one wheel having six spokes, meaning the six seasons. To consider the seasons as the spokes on the wheel of the chariot of time is supremely appropriate and pleasant. As a wheel moves, its spokes should necessarily move, one followed by the other, and the chariot of time has no reverse gear. time lost can never be retrieved!

The entire picture becomes really very impressive when we are told that the glory of the world of phenomena rests upon this wheel like the 'fly on the wheel', and the universe in its delusion feels the glory of having a movement of its own!.

Sri Sankaracharya comments upon this *mantra* and gives us a beautiful interpretation which makes clear to us that the rishi is justified in quoting this stanza. Bhagawan Sankara says that whether the Sun be with all the qualifications described in the first line of the *mantra* (with five feet, twelve forms, the giver of rain, etc.), or he be as described in the second line (who rides a chariot drawn by seven horses, moving on a wheel with six spokes, etc.), whatever be the differences in details, the object indicated by both descriptions is one and the same: *prana* or the Sun or the Lord of Time. The difference in the qualifications is due to the difference in the texture of the imaginations; but the object of the qualifications is one and the same: whatever be the *gunas*, the *guni* is one and the same.

मासो वै प्रजापतिस्तस्य कृष्णपक्ष एव रयिः
 शुक्लः प्राणास्तस्मादेते ऋषयः
 शुक्ल इष्टं कुर्वन्तीतर इतरस्मिन् ॥ १२ ॥

Maaso vai prajaapati-stasya krishnapaksha eva Rayih,
Sukla Praanaas-tasmaad-ete rishayah
sukla ishtam kurvante-etara itarasmin (12)

The month is *Prajapati*; its dark half is indeed *Rayi*, the *matter*, its bright half the *prana*, the *energy*. Therefore, these great rishis perform sacrifices in the bright half of the month but others perform them in the dark half.

So far, Pippalada had described stage by stage how the entire creation had started with the Creator *Prajapati*, who first of all, himself became the Sun and the Moon, the representatives of *energy* and *matter*. By a combination of them we have the concept of the year, and earlier we have seen how in the year also there are the intrinsic qualities of the creator, as found in the path of the Sun and the path of the Moon. Now Pippalada goes one step further and says that the month, which is a division of the year, is also nothing but *Prajapati*.

Out of a piece of silver the goldsmith makes a long thick rod; the rod is nothing other than silver. The rod is again drawn into yards of wire; the wire is nothing other than silver. The wire is cut into pieces and each one rounded into a ring; even now all the rings are nothing other than silver. If now the goldsmith strings the rings together into a chain, the

chain should again be nothing other than silve. And if the chain is cut into pieces as ornament for the neck or the feet, wherever it may be, it is nothing but silver everywhere.

Similarly here the Creator becomes the Sun and the Moon, and thereafter the conception of the year rises. Now we have come to the idea of the month. If it were also to be nothing other than the Creator there must be Sun aspect and the Moon aspect in it. This is indicated here by the *mantra* when it says that in each month, during the dark fortnight, we have the inactive *matter* aspect and in the bright fortnight the active Sun aspect. Those who perform great sacrifices do so during the bright fortnight hoping to gain a greater efficacy and efficiency in their activities, for that part of the month is under the direct influence of the *prana* or *energy*.

'Others,' meaning those who find no distinction between the dark and the bright fortnights—that is, those who have realised that they are both aspects of the same entity, the Creator—perform their sacrifices in the dark fortnights also. All rituals performed without desires (*Nishkama karmas*), purely as a training for self-integration, as a pure dedication to the Lord, can be undertaken even in the dark fortnight.

अहोरात्रो वै प्रजापतिस्तस्याहरेव प्राणो रात्रिरेव रयिः।
 प्राणं वा एते प्रस्कन्दन्ति ये दिवा रत्या संयुज्यन्ते।
 ब्रह्मचर्यमेव तद्यद्रात्रौ रत्या संयुज्यन्ते॥ १३ ॥

*Ahoraatro vai Prajaapati-
 stasya-ahareva praano
 raatrireva rayih.*

*Praanam vaa ete praskandanti
 ye divaa ratyaa samyujyante.
 Brahmacharyameva tadyadraatrau
 ratyaa samyujante.*

(13)

A full twenty-four-hour day is again the *Prajapati* of which the daytime is the 'energy aspect' and the nighttime the 'matter aspect'. Those who unite in love in the day, therefore, waste their energy while those who unite in love in the night are to be considered verily *Brahmacharins*.

Satan can read the Bible; he reads it and uses it for his own suicide. There are friends, erudite in their own way, who quote this *mantra* and

for all their excesses, claim to be *brahmacharins* in the true sense of term. How far it is true, we shall observe during the discussion.

We all know that the day is the unit of measure in the concept of the month, just as the month is a division of the year. We have already seen the logic of considering the year and the month in themselves to be nothing but *Prajapati*, and under the same argument— 'the golden chain also is nothing but gold'— the day also is nothing but *Prajapati*. Just as we proved that fifty samples of fluid are all nothing but water by testing in the laboratory and finding every sample, on analysis, to be only Hydrogen and Oxygen, so too, here Pippalada shows that the 24-hour-day is also *Prajapati* because in it also there are the Sun and the Moon aspects. The daytime is the *energy* aspect and the nighttime the *matter* aspect.

Because a rishi says that the day is dedicated to *energy* and the night is presided over by *matter* the students of Vedanta are not expected to accept the statement pocketing their own intellectual doubts. The rishi knows that perfect intellectual democracy is the tradition of Vedantic thought and so he hastens to point out to us how and why the *Sastra* states that the day is dedicated to energy.

A vivid subjective test for this is possible. And since the rishi is addressing his discourses mainly to persons who have faced the *grihastha* life (the life of the householder), he is giving a physiological fact which must certainly be within the penumbra of the students' own personal experience. He says that conjugal relationship during the daytime exhausts the partners much more than such a mischief when done behind the Sun! Even the modern medical science should accept this as a fact. From this observation he tries to give an inkling of what he meant by the statement, "*The day is prana and the night indeed is matter,*" After this observation, as a digression the great rishi talks, over the shoulders of the disciples, to the world of householders, with a declaration that to mate at night is relatively *brahmacharya* itself.

But alas, our bookworm pundits who have learnt Vedanta through dictionaries and encyclopaedias, mistake the whole import of the statement and misuse it so annihilate themselves. By this statement Pippalada is not pulling down the temple of Vedanta; he only means that those who *must*—that is, those who by their temperaments and due to circumstances cannot avoid perpetrating this 'crime'— may as well be

* We have already described this idea more elaborately in *Brahmana* 6.

advised to go through the inevitable process at a less harmful period of time and in relatively healthier conditions of behaviour. Certainly, Vedanta advises and upholds only the perfect *brahmacharya*; there is no compromise to it at all. This is only a relatively true statement: if you must kill your dog do it with a quick bullet shot directed at his heart; this advice should not mean that every dog is to be shot.

अन्नं वै प्रजापतिस्ततो ह वै तद्वैतस्तस्मादिमाः
 प्रजाः प्रजायन्त इति॥ १४ ॥

Annam vai prajaapati-
 stato ha vai tadretas-
 tasmad imaah prajaah prajaayanta iti.

(14)

Food is indeed *Prajapati* from that indeed proceeds the seed-fluid in man; from that all these creatures are born.

Just to recapitulate we may go through all the stages through which *Prajapati* himself has seemingly passed and changed to become the pluralistic world. First He becomes *matter* and *energy*. Then He, as Time, changes himself into the various conceptional denominations such as year, month, day, etc., and day by day things grow in the world and *matter* ripens to become food. Living creatures eat the food and from the essence of the food the seeds of the species are generated. From the seeds the fresh generation rises up. So the master concludes, "All these creatures are thus born," for, if you remember well, the question of the disciple was, "Venerable master, whence are these creatures born?"

It is significant here to note that the day which is nothing but *Prajapati* produces food and so food is also *Prajapati*. Food produces the seminal fluid which, naturally, must be nothing but *Prajapati*. And when it causes the creation of the next generation, each new born is, again, nothing but *Prajapati*. Therefore, my father was *Prajapati*, who ate *Prajapati*, secreted *Prajapati*, impregnated *Prajapati* and the son *Prajapati* was born as me. But the tragedy is that I do not realise that I am *Prajapati*!

Therefore, though the great rishi has seemingly given an almost airtight and convincing scheme to show how from the Creator the world has come to be, when the whole picture is brought to our understanding

we find that the master has not thereby deviated, even by an iota, from Eternal Truth which he has realised in himself. He mainly declares that creation is but a delusion of the mind and there is nothing that has really risen up from the Eternal Reality.

तद्ये ह वै तत्प्रजापतिव्रतं चरन्ति ते मिथुनमुत्पादयन्ते।
 तेषामेवैष ब्रह्मलोको येषां तपो ब्रह्मचर्यं येषु सत्यं
 प्रतिष्ठितम्॥ १५ ॥

*Tadye ha vai tat-prajaapati vratam charanti
 te mithunam- utpaadayante.
 Tesham-eva-isa brahmaloko,
 yeshaam tap brahmacharyam,
 yeshu satyam pratishtitam.*

(15)

Thus, therefore, those who observe this rule of *Prajapati* produce a pair. For then alone is the *Brahma Loka* in whom penance, celibacy and truth abide.

Licentious indulgence in sex has never depraved any species in the kingdom of creatures so much as man today. All around the globe, irrespective of geographical conditions, cultural heritage and physiological needs, there is such over-indulgence in sex contacts that the whole world is now groaning under the heavy burden of overpopulation. At this time, the world health organisations and great thinkers have started talking in terms of restraint and self-control—more as an economic urgency rather than as a cultural necessity. Their efforts are now directed to the prevention of children rather than the denial of the act—a perversion declaring the detestable ugliness of the very material culture.

At such a time it is a refreshing surprise to find the so-called antiquated masters of our timeless scriptures prescribing self-control to householders, not merely as a passing convenience to keep a healthy dollar-rupee relationship but as an unavoidable rule of life to maintain man at a certain cultural par. Those householders, especially those who are daily meditating upon the first chapter of this *Upanishad* on the lines indicated, cannot produce more than a pair of children: a boy and a girl. This would certainly read as almost *tapascharya* in our present times.

‘To such men of healthy moral habits, self-controlled living and self-expanding meditations,’ says the *Upanishad*, ‘the *Brahma loka* is

reserved.' in this connection, in the grosser meaning of the *brahmana*, we need not take the *Brahma loka* to mean technically the supramental of supraconscious plane considered as a world in itself, but we may take it to mean a happy social and economic scheme of living in this world below.

It is clearly stated here that by such a scheme of living heaven can be brought down into the world—if man were to live in celibacy (*brahmacharya*), self-control (*tapas*) and truthfulness (*satyam*), contributing his own little share, if not in heightening the social joys of the world, at least in not adding deliberately to the social sorrow through overbreeding. Overbreeding brings at the doors of the era unwanted children who rot and grow into a community of criminals, uneducated and untrained and who, in fact, become nothing more than mere mouths to be fed. Such a population is the greatest liability of any generation and to eliminate them nature will have to foment, now and then, a war. The Malthusian theory of population will have then to work itself out through blood, sweat and toil, pestilence and famine, drought and floods, disease and death.

तेषामसौ विरजो ब्रह्मलोको न येषु
जिह्वामनृतं न माया चेति॥ १६ ॥

*Teshaam-asau virajo brahmaloko,
na yeshu jihvam-anritam,
na maayaa cheti.*

(16)

The pure *Brahma Loka* belongs to them only in whom there is no deceit or dissimulation (The scriptures declare here that evolution can be really progressive only in those who have given up all the negativities in them, such as deceit, falsehood or dissimulation).

Deceit is a declaration of the physical cowardice in the individual born, in fact, out of a mental crookedness; and crookedness of the mind is an ugliness it has come to gain for itself because of the unhealthy ways of life the flesh has adopted in its transactions with the outer world of objects. Deceit includes an incorporated falsehood. Falsehood does, indeed, impoverish man of all his capacity to execute and to achieve. This idea is often forgotten and never taken into consideration when the bazaar-rich cries that 'honesty will ruin my business these days.'

Personally, I myself have discussed this idea of truthfulness with some thousands of people whom I know intimately. Eighty per cent of them admit the glory of honesty but they complain of their incapacity to put it into practice either because of some obvious mental inability or some imagined pressure of circumstances! If only these people would understand the mental losses accrued in telling lies they would certainly stop this ruinous and suicidal habit.

To tell a lie is to express differently from what you actually feel. Sri Sankaracharya defines truthfulness as speaking words which are entirely in consonance with what the speaker thinks, both in its import and suggestiveness. Thus to think in one way and to express it differently would be a lie.

You will wonder why so much emphasis is placed in all the religions of the world upon honesty and truthfulness! A little closer examination of what happens in our minds before we tell a lie would be sufficient to make us understand how much we are harming ourselves in telling lies.

Supposing I want leave of absence from my office to go with my friends for the weekend: I ask the officer in charge for a day's leave, knowing quite sure that he will not grant it if I tell him the honest purpose. So, naturally, I have to tell such a big story that it must produce sufficient sympathy in the officer to sanction me my leave immediately. Thus, I type out a leave request saying either 'I am not well' or 'My child is not well' or 'My mother is seriously ill.' Now, the officer calls me and, perhaps, he feels moved and enquires, 'Is your mother seriously ill? What is she suffering from?'

In your honest mind immediately the answer comes out even as you hear the question, 'My mother is perfectly all right; she is not suffering from anything' But in your own mind you also feel that to say so would be to get a rebuff and not leave of absence, and so you say, 'Yes, my mother is seriously ill. Oh! it is one of those old age diseases!'

These two sets of thinking, in fact, mutually negate each other and produce what is psychologically called a self-cancellation of thoughts. This impoverishes the mental power in willing efficiently; for, even when you deliberately think such a thought as 'I must win' or 'I must succeed,' the habit of the mind to entertain self-cancelling thoughts at once produces an irresistible flow of negative thoughts which negate your own determination. Irresistibly, thoughts such as 'I will never succeed or 'I will never win,' rise up in your mind to sabotage your own

previous strength of will. Thus, we become impoverished in our thought-power (*Sankalpa sakti*). This is the simple reason why the spiritualists insist that honesty must be pursued with a deliberate insistence amounting almost to religious fanaticism.

Combining the previous *brahmana* along with this, we have in them a perfect scheme of living in which spiritual progress can be guaranteed. Regular meditation, intelligent self-control, a spirit of truthfulness and avoidance of crookedness, falsehood and hypocrisy are sure to take any spiritual seeker stage by stage up the ladder of evolution.

The bliss of perfection is the destiny of the few; it is not a lucky accident of the hypocrite or the deceitful. In Truth, therefore, there is no compromise!

HERE ENDS THE FIRST PRASNA

QUERY II

BHARGAVA AND PIPPALADA

IN THE earlier chapter the rishi established that the pluralistic world of things and being has risen up from *Prajapati*, the Creator. In this connection we were given all the details regarding the exact sequence in which the various manifestations have come to pass. It has been said that energy or *prana* is the consumer of *matter* and how exactly it consumes the outer world of *matter* is explained.

But the *Sastra* has not explained how the *Prana* is acting within the body. To explain this phenomenon this chapter has been opened, which enquires into the chief activities in the body through which the individual comes to gain the endless experience from moment to moment, the sum total of which is called life. As we said earlier, life is a series of experiences and nobody can avoid them even for a second. In order to gain these experiences we have our instruments of knowledge in the sense organs and the instruments of action in the body. 'These are fully and efficiently supported by our mind and intellect.

Here the student is enquiring what exactly are the phenomenal factors of the presiding deities in the physical structure:

अथ हैनं भार्गवो वैदर्भिः पप्रच्छ।
भगवन्कत्येव देवाः प्रजा विधांरयन्ते
कतर एतत्प्रकाशयन्ते कः पुनरेषां वरिष्ठ इति॥ १ ॥

Atha hainam Bhaargavo Vaidarbhih papraccha.
'Bhagavan katyeva devaah prajaam vidhaarayante?
Katara etat prakaasayante?

Kah punareshaam Varishtha? iti.

Then Bhargava, of Vidarbha, questioned the master. 'O Bhagavan, how many factors (*Devas*) support the living being? which of them enlightens this? Again, who among them is the greatest?'

The question has deep implications. The first question was mainly about the entire world of objects including ourselves while this particular question enquires into the story of how the individual reacts of the world outside and what are the instruments by which he comes to his reaction.

As we analyse the entire pattern of the textbook we will find that the questions at first deal with outermost world and in stages, slowly and steadily in their general treatment, they turn more and more inward towards the 'subject'. Thus, the first question was about the world of objects and now, by the second question, the student is enquiring into the construction of the physical structure and its maintenance.

In the question, the word *Deva* means only that factor which enlightens and therefore, the question intended to enquire as to what are the instruments of knowledge or illumination in this physical body. Naturally, the question is upon the different sense organs of knowledge. But one may wonder why the disciple put the question in this fashion: 'How many *Devas* support the creature?'

It is scientific fact well known to all educated students that the body of a creature cannot exist if the sense organs do not function in it. We may have a blind man living; we may meet with a man both blind and deaf; it is indeed very rare that we meet with one who is blind, deaf and dumb. It is certain that an individual will not live if he be without sight, hearing, speech and the power of smelling! Never can a body exist for long when it has lost more than three of its sense perceptions.

Therefore, the question is perfectly intelligent and extremely sane when it asks who all are the *Devas* that support the body. The body cannot exist without the sense organs. There is a reason for it: the egocentric concept has entered a physical form to gain its experiences from the outer world of circumstances; the inlets for the flow of experience to the ego are the five sense organs.

Thus, if the five sense organs are not functioning the egocentre cannot gain by that incarnation any experience for itself and so, it

should necessarily leave that body and seek yet another instrument for its mission. But having come here, we, in our preoccupation with our life, misunderstand ourselves and run after meaningless purposes and useless activities. Thus, the materialistic world of today cannot easily understand this stanza while to the spiritualists of the Vedic period this was quite obvious and clear!

Merely because there are apertures on the two sides of the nose called the eyes, we cannot say that it is these dotted white balls that see the forms in the outer world. Even medical science admits that it is the nerve centre in the brain that actually recognises the forms. The eyeballs with their lenses, irises, etc., are but *instruments* of seeing the forms which are in the outer world of objects. But there is a seer, and intelligent, behind the *instruments* of seeing to make it possible for the outer object to become the knowledge of form. It is this correct understanding in the intelligent disciple that makes him enquire 'What *Devatas* exactly enlighten the instruments ?'

It is obvious that each of the instruments is so made as to illumine or perceive only a given type of objects and so each must have distinctly different controller blessing it.

And yet a supreme observer must be synchronising the various substation observations into a whole from within, for, everyone of us is gaining for himself a total knowledge of all the properties of every objects reported through the eyes, hear the noises reported through the ears, get the smell of the objects as reported by the nose, feel the soft touch of the flowers as reported by the skin, and get a taste of the *prasad* as reported by the tongue. Besides these different items of reports, I also get a total concept of all these put together which is called my experience of the *pooja*. Therefore, there must be a superior observer who in himself gathers all observations from the different outposts and comes to experience the totality of it all. The student here is enquiring for that one great experiencer by the question, 'Who among them is the greatest?'

तस्मै स होवाचाऽऽकाशो ह वा एष देवो
वायुरग्निरापः पृथिवी वाङ्मनश्चक्षुः श्रोत्रं च।
ते प्रकाश्याभिवदन्ति वयमेतद्बाणं अवष्टभ्य विधारयामः॥ २ ॥

Tasmai sa hovaacha 'Akaasa ha vaa esha devo

Vaayur-agnir-aapah prithivee
Vaangmanas-chkshuh srotram cha.
Te prakaasyaabhivadanti
vayametad-baanam avashtabhya vidhaarayaamah.'

He replied, 'These Devas are verily the Ether, Air, Fire, Water, Earth, Speech, Mind, Eye and the Ear. They, manifesting their glory, quarrelled among themselves and said, 'We hold together and support this body.'

The rishi is now answering the question one by one. He has explained in detail that the factors that support the body are the instruments of knowledge and the instruments of action presided over by the mind. Now he hints at the fact that these instruments are all governed by the five great elements.

The modern mentality in us, trained and developed by a foreign scheme of education, thrust upon us by circumstances, had made us today an ugly caricature of what we were before. We are today neither Indian nor of the present. We are, in fact, culturally orphans with neither a mother tongue nor a father spirit. As such, in our own depravity and cultural bankruptcy, we may not be able to appreciate the pattern of the rishi's thoughts. The idea is pregnant with suggestions we known to every seeker at the time of the *Upanishad*. We will go into the details and try to understand some of them.

Any college professor would affirm that 'sound cannot be created without space.' Sound can be produced and relayed only when there is some space or ther. Now, without sound our ears would have been only a meaningless pair of holes, unnecessary for us and, perhaps, would serve only as hooks to hold our spectacles in old age! As we cannot hear the outside sounds when the ear-holes are closed and can hear them when they are reopened, we infer that we are perceiving the sound because of these two holes. The great rishis of old thus come to express this idea in their technical language as '*the ear is presided over by the Devata called Dik,*' which means quarters or space.

Similarly, if there are no forms in the outer world to be cognised by the eyes, the openings on the two sides of the nose would have no meaning for us. The eyes, however, can illumine only its own objects: the forms and colours. But, at the same time, it is not sufficient that the eyes face the objects. In a room there may be hundreds of bundles of hundred-rupee notes and yet you, the poorest of the poor, straving and dying, may be sitting in the very same dark room, weeping for small

change to purchase some food. The 'object' is in front of you, your eyes are wide open, and yet they cannot illumine the object because the room is dark; for, the eyes can function only in a medium of light. In their language the rishis declared, '*The eyes are presided over by the Sun,*' meaning the source of all light.

Similarly, when we analyse we find that there is indeed a great connection between the sense organ knowledge and the organs of action in us, and the five great elements. It is in this sense that the master answers here that the *Devas* governing and controlling the five organs of knowledge and action are the five great elements.

The next question of the disciple is to enquire as to who illumines these various sense organs and also who among them is the greatest. Both these questions can be answered in the same breath: the teacher could have said that such and such a definite power is the greatest. Instead, the employs here the technique of story-telling. This technique is absolutely necessary to serve as a psychological treatment for the probable intellectual vanity in the student, as otherwise he may revolt and refuse to accept a flat statement from the *guru* when he indicates directly the power that is the Supreme. To avoid this intellectual rub the teacher employs this technique.

He says that once upon a time a great controversy raged among these various organs as to who among them was the greatest, and all the sense organs cried together, '*We hold the body politic in our combined grace.*' There was in each one of them a large dose of personal vanity and self-congratulatory conceit. They could not understand that there was some power greater than them all, but for whom they would have had no strength at all.

तान्वरिष्ठः प्राण उवाच।
 मा मोहमापद्यथाहमेवैतत्पञ्चधाऽत्मानं
 प्रविभज्यैद्बाणमवष्टभ्य विधारयामीति॥ ३ ॥

Taanvarishtah praana uvaacha.
'Maa mohamaapadyatha,
Aham-eva-etat-pahchadha-atmaanam
pravibhajya-etat-baanam-avashtabhya
vidhaarayaami' iti.

Prana, the greatest of them, said, 'Be not lost in delusion: I alone, dividing myself fivefold, support this body and keep it going.'

When, as we found earlier, the organs of action and knowledge quarrel among themselves, each crying that he is the most important factor in the body politic, the *prana* quietly comes forward in this *Brahmana* with a self-confidence born out of his own sense of unquestionable superiority and advises all others. He characterises all as 'deluded'. Their pathetic self-arrogation has risen from their vanity and the consequent sense of selfimportance. *Prana* here informs them that he alone is the strength and power which they are manifesting, and he alone is the vital factor in the body. The *prana*, dividing himself into five distinct channels of activity, feeds them all in their functioning and maintains the individual actively living through his experiences in life.

तेऽश्रद्धधाना बभूवुः
 सोऽभिमानादूर्ध्वमुत्क्रमत इव
 तस्मिन्नुत्क्रामत्यथेतरे सर्व एवोत्क्रामन्ते
 तस्मिंश्च परतिष्ठमाने सर्वे एव प्रतिष्ठन्ते।
 तद्यथा मक्षिका मधुकरराजानमुत्क्रामन्तं
 सर्वा एवोत्क्रामन्ते तस्मिंश्च प्रतिष्ठमाने
 सर्वा एव प्रातिष्ठन्त एवं वाङ्मनश्चक्षुः
 श्रोत्रं च, ते प्रीता प्राणं स्तुन्वन्ति॥ ४ ॥

*Te asraddhadhaanaa babhoovuh,
 Sobhimaanaadoordhvam utkramata iva,
 tasminnutkraamati athetare
 sarva eva-utkraamante
 tasminscha pratishthamaane
 sarya eva pratishthante.
 Tadyathaa makshikaa madhukara-raajaanam-
 utkraamantam sarvaa evotkraamante,
 tasminscha pratishthamaane sarvaa eva pratishthanta;
 evem vaangmanaschakshu-hu srotram cha
 te preetaaha praanam stunvanti.*

(4)

They did not believe. The principal *Prana* got irritated and seemed as it were to go out of the body. When the *Prana* got up to depart all others immediately had to get up too, and

when it remained in its place all the others remained—just as when the Queen-bee leaves all the bees leave the hive and they return to it when she returns—and the mind, speech, eye, ear and the rest, being pleased, praised the *Prana*.

Anyone suffering from extreme egocentric vanity can never understand or appreciate the truth about himself unless he gets a bitter experience from personal circumstances. The *Prana*, understanding the truth that the *indriyas* are vain, showed them his own greatness by *going out of the body*. In fact, the *prana* cannot afford to leave the body, for, if the *prana* leaves the body the whole problem stands at once solved! Hence the *Srutis* is careful in explaining that '*the prana got up as though to leave the body*.'

Even when '*the prana got up as though going*,' all other *indriyas* in the body fainted, and when the *prana* took back the reins of office, all the *indriyas* started functioning as before. Thus, they surrendered themselves to glorify the *prana* that he is greater than all of them individually and collectively.

Even while discussing such a drab and dry philosophical matter in a textbook like the *Upanishads* where it is a sin to use even a single extra word, the rishis could never resist the temptation when a very apt and suggestive analogy of beauty suggested itself to them. A typical Hindu is ever thirsty for more beauty and hungry for more rhythm.

Here we have in this very *Brahmana* a beautiful analogy to show how so many are dependent upon a single solitary factor. When the queen-bee in the beehive leaves the hive according to her fancy, the entire population follows her immediately, and when she returns they too return. So too, when the *prana* leaves the body all the centres of activity and knowledge become ineffectual and when the *prana* takes his seat again all the centres in the body become re-energized.

This story of the revolt of the sense organs against the *prana's* authority, and the supreme *prana's* successful strategy in crushing this revolution is all made up by the master only to bless his disciples. If he had declared directly that of all the organs the *prana* is the most important, an uninitiated student would not have accepted it because, generally, we are not aware of the connection between the *prana* and the *indriyas*. In our hasty understanding of our own structure we feel that the *indriyas* are independent of the influence of the *prana*. The story*

* The story of this revolt of the *indriyas* reminds us of the dispute between the sense organs as explained in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* (VI-1) and also in *Chandogya Upanishad* (V-1).

slowly and steadily provides us with all the arguments necessary and then declares that the *prana* is the supreme factor in the body.

When once they got convinced of the great greatness of the *prana* and of their total dependence upon the *prana* for their very existence, the *indriyas* crowded around him in admiration, reverence and gratitude, and started praising him.

एषोऽग्निस्तपत्येष सूर्य एष पर्जन्यो मघवानेष वायुरेष
पृथिवी रयिर्देवः सदसच्चामृतं च यत् ॥ ५ ॥

*Esho-gnistapatyasha Soorya esha
parjanya Maghavaanesha
Vaayuresha prithivee Rayir devah
sadasacchaamritam cha yat.*

(5)

As the fire, *Prana*, life burns. As the sun, life shines. As the clouds, life rains. As Indra, the *Prana* rules. It is the wind; it is the earth; it is the Moon, *Deva*. It is both that which has 'form' and that which is 'formless'.

From this stanza onwards we have eight beautiful pieces of glorification addressed to the *prana* conceived as the nucleus of all *energy* (power and dynamism) both within the body and without in the universe. A detailed study with understanding and critical enquiry of all these stanzas will give us an intuitive perception of what the *Sruti* means by the world *prana*. Certainly, it is not the atmospheric air which the living creatures breathe in and out through their nostrils. By general usage, the word has come to gather that connotation and we have used this word so often in this particular sense that it is not easy for us to find in the same word, all of a sudden, a larger meaning or a greater import. All the same, if we are to understand the scriptural text properly we have to understand the word *prana* as used here, meaning the *energy* which vitalises the *matter* in life.

This total energy, *prana*, is the vital factor behind fire in that it makes it burn; behind the Sun, the burning orb of light and energy, is this divine *prana*. Thus if *prana* be the Sun, we with our scientific knowledge cannot but congratulate the rishis for their vision when they say that the same *prana* is the lord of the clouds, the rains and the movement of the winds. In Sanskrit we divide the movement of air (or

wind) into seven classes on the basis of its direction and behaviour. *avah* 'coming'; *pravah* 'going'; *nivah* 'whirling' and so on.

We have already seen earlier that *Prajapati* himself became the Sun and the Moon, and that the Sun is *prana* (energy) and the Moon is *rayi* (matter). In the light of this earlier description it becomes obvious what it means when the *indriyas* glorify the *prana* as the very vital factor behind the Moon. In short, the stanza concludes by saying that the *prana* is the truth behind all that have "forms" as well as are "formless"; In Vedanta they divide the entire gross world of elements into two groups—gross and subtle. The gross elements are fire, water and earth, and the subtle elements are space and air. The gross elements are technically called *moorta* (with form) and the subtle elements *ammoorta* (without form).

अरा इव रथनाभौ प्राणे सर्वं प्रतिष्ठितम्
ऋचो यजूषि सामानि यज्ञः क्षत्रं ब्रह्म च॥ ६ ॥

Araa iva rathanaabhau, praane sarvam pratisthitam.
Richo yajoomshi saamaani, yajnah kshatram brahma cha. (6)

As spokes in a wheel, in the *prana* (Energy) everything (in the universe) is fixed. The *Rik mantras*, the *Yajur Veda* and the songs of *Sama*, all *Yajnas*, all dynamic activities (*Kshatriya*) and all spiritual endeavours (*Brahmana*)—everything rests in the *Prana*.

The glorification of the *prana* continues, unveiling his glory a little more to allow us to discover a little more of the loveliness and the irresistible charm in nature's vitality. In the newly gained glimpse we get one more peep into that treasure of beauty. We are told that the entire universe rests and maintains itself on the *prana*. In the axle of the wheel are the spokes tightened; if the axle is loose the spokes get off their tensions and thereby the rim of the wheel loses its efficiency. The entire universe of rhythm and order, of laws and regulations, is maintained in its strict nature because of the central vital factor, the *prana*.

Even the very knowledge of *Brahma vidya* can be learnt and taught only under the unseen presidentship of the *prana*. If the *guru* is to discuss and the *sishya* is to understand, both of them would need the dynamising grace of the *prana*. Even after hearing the teacher, if the

student is to continue his reading (*swadhyaya*) or reflection (*manana*) upon the themes of Vedanta or meditate long (*nididhyasana*) upon the great Truth, all these are possible only when the student is consistently graced by the *prana*. The physical body and the intellect cannot function by themselves—they being nothing but *matter*—unless they are energized by the *prana*.

So much so the entire *Karma kanda* would have been a mere fantasy, impractical and useless to mankind if the *prana* were not functioning in the priests performing the *yajnas*! Thus, no ritualism starts without invoking the *prana*: even the *Sandhya vandan* and ordinary devotional prayers are undertaken only after an invocation of the *prana*.

Not only for the purposes of the higher vocations of life, such as the study of the scriptures, and spiritual and ritualistic activities, but even for the establishment and maintenance of the moral and social order of a country and nourishing the particular features of the people in the development of their national character, the *prana* is essential. These ideas have been indicated by the terms *Kshatriyas* and *Brahmanas*: here they do not stand for the degenerate concept of the two castes as it exists today, but for the active qualities of adventure and dedicated work (*Kshatriya*) and for the nobler and subtler qualities of head and heart, making man see visions of perfection as philosophers and thinkers (*Brahmana*). All these *Kshatriya*-like activities and *Brajmana*-like visions are possible only when the generation is well under the grace of the *prana*.

प्रजापतिश्चरसि गर्भे त्वमेव प्रतिजायसे।
तुभ्यं प्राण प्रजास्त्विमा बलिं हरन्ति यः प्राणैः प्रतितिष्ठसि॥ ७ ॥

Prajaapati-scharasi garbhe tvameva pratijaayase.
Tubhyam praana prajaastvima
balim haranti yah praanaah pratishthasi. (7)

As *Prajapati*, the Lord of Creatures, O *Prana*, thou alone movest in the womb the foetus, and thou indeed art born as the child. To thee O *Prana*, who art always accompanied by the other *Prnas* (sense organs), the creatures offer oblations.

Even in doing *kirtan* the great rishis and their children never forget the logic of what they say: there seems to be a definite and deep

implication in the very style in which the thoughts in the passages have developed from stanza to stanza..

In the first stanza all the phenomenal happenings necessary for the maintenance of life on the globe have been attributed to the grace of the *prana*. In the second stanza we are told that man's entire self development and cultural growth, including all achievements, social, communal and political, are made possible only by the *energy* content in each man. In the third stanza, which is the theme of our discussion now, we are told that everything that is born, in fact, is nothing but 'thy own different manifestations.'^{*}

Having thus been born as a being the *prana* dwells within each form efficiently supervising the other subsidiary channels of energy called the *upa-pranas*. And in order to adore the *prana* who is thus ruling over the body through well-chosen and efficient ministers, the whole human structure wanders about, ever seeking new experiences; at each experience they cull a few flowers of homage, respect and reverence, and bring them as offering unto the *prana*.

This is one of the highlights of beauty in this *Upanishad*. To declare that, as devoted lovers, the *indriyas* are bringing their impressions of the external world of objects' is something which is at once passionately beautiful and innately bountiful. A seeker who is well grounded in this noble idea can thereafter be considered free to go about anywhere on the face of the globe; he shall no more be deluded with the glitter of *maya*; he can never be caught up by the tentacles of sensuousness.

All that he sees or enjoys are but offerings brought to the altars of the *prana*. All sounds heard are but oblations to the *prana*. All smells and touch are but hymns sung at the feet of the Supreme within. Whatever he, who goes out to face life with this perennial consciousness of a Supreme within, does thereafter is nothing but a glorious *prana pooja*. Herein is amplified the entire depth of significance in Krishna's advice to Arjuna, *Mam Anusmara Yudhya Ca*: 'Remembering me continuously, go about, Arjuna, fighting the battle of life.'

* We have already examined a similar idea earlier: see discussions on Query I, *Brahma*: a 14.

¹ A similar hymn to the *Prana* is seen in Atharva Veda II, 4-19. Many happy reminiscences of this hymn are seen in *Prasnopanishad*.

देवानामसि वह्नितमः पितृणां प्रथमा स्वधा।
ऋषीणां चरितं सत्यमथर्वाङ्गिरसामसी॥ ८ ॥

Devaanaamasi vahnitamah, pitrnaam prathamaa svadhaa.
Risheenaam charitam satyam, atharvaangirasaamasi. (8)

Thou art the best carrier to the Gods and thou carry the first oblations to the forefathers.,
Thou art the true dynamic principle behind the senses (*Upa-pranas*) which are the chief
factor of the body.

Continuing the glorification, we are told how the *prana* is, in its fire
form (manifestation as fire), carrier or the conveyor of our oblations to
the world of the manes. The *prana* is the main factor behind the sense
organs because without the *prana* the sense organs cannot function
independently: bereft of the *prana* the *indriyas* retire from all activities
and become impotent in serving the body. The *prana* is that chief factor
which, through its subdivisions or assistants, supervises and executes
the job of perception through the sense organs.

इन्द्रस्त्वं प्राण तेजसा रुद्रोऽसिपरिरक्षिता।
त्वमन्तरीक्षे चरसि सूर्यस्त्वं ज्योतिषां पतिः॥ ९ ॥

Indrastvam, praana tejasaa, Rudro-si parirakshitaa.
Tavam-antarekshhe charasi Sooryastvam jyotishaam paith. (6)

O *Prana*, the Lord *Indra* of all Energy, thou art *Rudra* in prowess and the Protector,
thou movest in the sky, thou art the Sun, the Lord of all 'Life.

In this stanza we are reminded of what we have been already told in
the earlier descriptions of the *prana*: that he is the Total Energy who is
nothing other than the Sun. This verse, however, gives us one more idea
that the Total Energy is himself nothing other than the non-dual factor
behind the Trinity. He himself is *Indra*, the creator, *Rudra*, the
destroyer and *Vishnu*, the protector. *Indra* is the presiding deity of the
mind and as such he is certainly the creator because all creative faculties
become active in us only when our minds function.

यदा त्वमभिवर्षस्यथेमा, प्राणते प्रजाः।
आनन्दरूपास्तिष्ठन्ति कामायात्रं भविष्यतीति॥ १० ॥

*Yadaa tvam-abhivarshasyathemaah praanate prajaah
Anandarooopaas-tishthanti,
kaamaayaannam bhavishyati iti.*

(10)

O *Prana*, when you cause the rain to shower down, these creatures of the glory sit delighted, hoping that there will be as much food as they desire.

Even in these days of tractors and fertilisers, artificial germination and induced insemination, science has not replaced nature in the field of food production. Irrigational canals may bring distant lands under cultivation and in our annual reports we may even dare to declare our self-sufficiency and independence from natural rains! And yet, even today, we must admit that rain at the appropriate time can bless agriculture a million times more than all our scientific and artificial methods put together. A true farmer's heart can dance in joy only when the rains are pattering over his ploughed fields amidst claps of tunder and flashes of lighting! It is very well known that a shower thrills the fields much more than the canal waters with their stagnant sterility.

As the Sun, the *prana*, as it has been already described, is the lord of the coluds. It is thus the *prana* alone that comes down in the form of rain to manifest itself as the seedling and serves as food for the creatures. When thus the rain comes the creatures of the *prana* sit in their farmyards and smile in optimistic joy at the prospect of much food. The modern economist would declare that even today plenty of food cause true prosperity since food price determines the wages and consequently the prices in the market.

When we analyse a little more the truth declared by the *Upanishad*—in small doses along the length so far covered—we find that the rishi has not budged an inch from the main Vedantic theory that all creation in the pluralistic world is but an error of perception in us. He has said that the Sun is the *prana* and the Sun causes the clouds; naturally, the clouds are nothing but the *prana* in another form he pours down as rain and produces food: food, therefore, is again the *prana*. We have been told already that the creatures are nothing but the *prana* since they are formed out of the essence of food, maintained in food and merge back into food. Therefore, the *prana* himself becomes the cloud-*prana*, the rain-*prana*, and the food-*prana*, and makes the creature-*prana* smile! The entire plurality and the various phenomena, such as rain, germination, growth, harvesting, eating and growing are nothing but the *prana* in its various manifestations.

व्रात्यस्त्वं प्राणैकऋषिरत्ता विश्वस्य सत्यतिः।
वयमाद्यस्य दातारः पिता त्वं मातरिश्चनः॥ ११ ॥

Vraatyastvam praanaika-rishirattaa visvasya satpatih.
Vayamaadyasya daataarah pitaa tvam maatarisvanah. (11)

O Prana, Thou art a *Vratya*, an unbaptised one. Thou art the sacred fire, *Ekarshi*, the onsumer of everything, the good Lord of the world. We are the givers of the oblations. O Father of the Wind (*Matarisva*), we are the givers of oblations. Thou art our father.

According to *Dharma Sastra*, all are born impure and each becomes pure after the sacred baptism which is the purifying ritual to be gone through, especially by a Brahmin. That is to say, as mortals we are, born imperfect; or we may say that anything that is born is imperfect, being finite. Now you and I, born impure, can be made pure either through the ritual with the help of a *pundit*, or through study with the help of a *guru*, or through spiritual practices at the feet of a *yogi*. But the *prana*, being the first born, had nobody other than himself at the time of his birth and so he could not go through his baptism.

This does not mean tht the *prana* is imperfect or impure; on the other hand, the *Sastra* wants us to understand that he required no baptism since he was born so pure. Impurity starts with the preception of plurality and the consequent delusory experience that the egocentric self interests are set in opposition to the others. In the case of the *prana* there were no such feelings and as such he was not polluted by the sins of attachment, hatred, greed, passion, cruelty or selfishness. The *prana* is indeed the father of the wind since wind cannot be where the *prana* is not.

या ते तनूवाचे प्रतिष्ठिता या श्रोत्रे या च चक्षुषि।
या च मनसि संतता शिवां तां कुरु मोत्क्रमीः॥ १२ ॥

Yaa te tanurvaachi pratishthitaa
yaa srotre yaa cha chakshushi.
Yaa cha manasi santataa
Sivaam taam kuru motkrameeh (12)

O Prana, make auspicious thy body which abides in speech, in the ear, in the eye, and also which prevails in the mind; please do not go out.

Almost concluding the series of glorifications chanted in honour of the *prana*, here is a stanza wherein through a series of seemingly confusing words an ocean of ideas is expressed, which gives us a true inkling of the cultural glory of the Hindus. The prayer is addressed by the sense organs to the *prana*, that Total Energy in the body. It is the *pranic* energy that makes it possible for the *indriyas* to function. We have understood that they are nothing but instruments and that their efficiency depends upon the quality and texture of the *energy* that works through them. Here the instruments of knowledge and action are invoking the *prana* with a request that he may manifest his glory in all its purity and strength through them, the instruments of his expression.

This stanza is clearly an echo of the very peace invocation with which we started the *Upanishad*. The request is that '*May the prana working behind our speech be pure,*' meaning, may our words be auspicious—not only helpful to our own cultural purification, but equally useful in encouraging others to live in a greater culture. So too '*let my mind be pure,*' '*let me eyes see nothing but purity,*' and '*my ears come to hear nothing but auspicious things.*'

This is in perfect consonance with Hindu culture. Here, more than thrusting perfection upon others as their right, the Hindu rishi insisted upon each individual to gear up to his duties and behaving himself naturally as a true Hindu. If the *prana* is pure in a man that individual's words shall be pure and his mind also shall naturally become pure. He whose mind also shall naturally become pure, he whose mind has become pure, his thoughts, consequently, shall be pure; and to such an individual destiny shall bring nothing but auspiciousness as his experience.

The *prana*, dividing itself into five distinct offices, does his function of vitalizing the matter envelopments constituting the body. This will be gone into in detail in the next question. But here, according to Sri Ananda Giri's footnotes (*teeka*), *apana* works in our speech *vyana* controls the ears, *prana* presides over the eyes, and *samana* abides in the mind.

It is also to be noted that the *indriyas* are crying out to the *prana* not to leave them—not because of any cowardly fear but because their new-born understanding has sharpened their appetite to enjoy the flow of the *prana* through them during all their activities of preception. To them life has become a mission of service to the *prana*, as his faithful instruments to fulfil his divine will!

प्राणस्येदं वशे सर्वं त्रिदिवे यत्प्रतिष्ठितम्
 मातेव पुत्रात्रक्षस्व श्रीश्च प्रजां च विधेहि नः इति॥ १३ ॥

*Praanasyedam vase sarvam,
 tridive yatpratishhitam.*

*Maateva putraan-rakshasva
 sreescha prajnaam cha vidhehinah iti*

(13)

All this is within the control of the *prana*; all that is in heaven is also under its control. Protect us like a mother. Give us prosperity and wisdom.

With this *Brahmana* we conclude the glorification of the *prana*, considered as the lord of the Total Energy in the whole universe. Please never mistake the *prana* for mere atmospheric air or mere breathing. *Pranayama* is in fact, effected only when we come to control the nucleus of all *energy* in ourselves. For this purpose we may start our practices through the grossest of the *pranic* representation: inspiration and expiration. But ultimately *pranayama* is accomplished only when the entire *energy* content in one's form has been perfectly brought under one's own control so as to direct it in whatever fashion one deems fit.

Viewed thus, certainly '*all this in the universe is established in energy*' and controlled and directed by *energy*. This portion of the rishi's words sounds like the most modern declarations of the nuclear scientists of our day; they also cry that *matter* is established, controlled and sustained by *energy*. Perhaps the only difference between the old and the new is that while the new is only toying with this idea without capitalising on it, the old rishis had, with admirable intellectual composure, employed the discovery and pursued its possibilities, not in annihilating each other but in blessing the entire generations of man. Out of their knowledge they worked out the theory of 'man's ascent to godhood'. In our modern age every discovery is employed in bringing man to a quicker and cleaner self-destruction!

The horse power in an engine can be invoked and it can be made either to convey us to our destination or to dash us to pieces against the wayside electric-post. The *energy* that takes us to our destination and that which shatters the car into smithereens during an accident are both one and the same. In the hands of an expert it can be directed to bless us; in the hands of a drunken fool the same blessing becomes a curse. Here, the prayer is an invocation to the mighty *energy* in us, the *prana*, to guide us and take us straight to our destination without any wayside accidents.

'*Protect us like a mother,*'— this is very significant. Our request is not that the *prana* should protect us like the government or the policeman, nor even like our own father. These people also do protect us but they do so because it is their duty, and not because of a sympathetic understanding of our needs instinctively born out of selfless love. The mother alone can understand the unsaid needs of the child and protect it.

Similarly here, the prayer is that we the seekers do not ourselves know what is good for us and we invoke the *prana* to bless us in what all ways we stand in need of blessing. What we invoke is not a king-like patronising *prana* ready to sanction what we ask for, but a mother-like loving *prana* who will give us what we need most.

'*Give us prosperity and wisdom.*'— The request to the *prana*, the Total Energy, to provide us with prosperity is not to be construed in terms of dollar and sterling; this prosperity is not the rupee-paisa wealth. Here what is meant by the term is the inner wealth of divine qualities, such as love, tolerance, mercy, kindness, etc. Without these no progress in spiritualism is ever possible and hence this humble request.

इति द्वितीयः प्रश्न

HERE ENDS THE SECOND PRASNA

QUERY III

KAUSALYA AND PIPPALADA

THE PROVINCE of enquiry which reduced itself from the extensive universe to the physical structure with its sense organs is now again reducing itself to a more subjective field. Having understood the world of objects outside, the enquiry of the student was naturally about his own physical structure. While explaining the working of the sense organs, the teacher also, with a masterly ease in the art of teaching, has consciously diverted the unconscious students' attention to a still deeper layer of personality. He said that the *indriyas* are working because of the *prana* and this hint sets the boys thinking about a still deeper layer in themselves. We shall be having in this chapter a discussion on this vital air sheath.

अथ हैनं कौसल्यश्चाऽऽलायनः पप्रच्छ।
भगवन्कुत एष प्राणो जायते
कथमायात्यस्मिञ्शरीरे आत्मानं
वा प्रविभज्य कथं प्रतिष्ठते केनोत्क्रमते
कथं बाह्यमभिधत्ते कथमध्यात्ममिति॥ १ ॥

Atha hainam Kausalyascha-asvalaayanah papraccha.

'Bhagavan, kuta esha praano jaayate?

Katham-aayaaty-asminsareere?

Aatmaanam vaa pravibhajya katham pratishthate?

Kena-utkramate? Katham baahyam-abhidhatte?' iti.

(1)

Katham-adhyaatmam iti.

Then Kausalya, son of Asvala, questioned, "O Bhagavan, whence has this *Prana* come? How does it abide after it has divided itself? How does it go out? How does it

support what is without and what is within the body?"

In the first two questions we had an enquiry into what is the fundamental factor in the world of objects and after a critical analysis the rishi had convinced us that it is the Creator (*Prajapati*) who himself has become *matter* and *energy*, and these, dancing in each other's embrace, provide us with the vital world of plurality constituting the world of objects. The student, having understood this much, came to enquire as to what are the fundamental factors in this very physical structure. The *Sruti* explains to us that the body is maintained by the sense organs and they in their turn are made efficient by the play of the *prana*, the *energy*, in the body.

Here, in the third question, the student is taking up this new line of suggestion given by the rishi—that here is the play of *prana* behind the *indriyas*—in making a thorough enquiry into the names, nature, functions, modes of behaviour, etc., of these vital factors in the body. But before he circumscribes his enquiry into the activities of the *prana* within the body, the student is very careful in making his knowledge thorough and, therefore, he first of all asks about the very cause of the *prana*.

Causation-hunting is the main preoccupation of the fragile instrument called the human intellect. Indeed, the intellect should develop to its maximum ere it can realise its own limitations. This is obvious from our own experiences in life. The half-educated scientist would have more self-confidence and daring to pit his intellect against nature's mighty scheme than a matured scientist. A physics professor in his petty classroom is more fanatical than a scientist in his den of discoveries. The more one gathers knowledge in a particular branch directly from nature, the more a genius comes to despair at his own inherent inability to understand the whole. Thus, a spiritual seeker also, in the early stage of his enquiry, must necessarily invest his entire intellect into the enquiry with a blind faith in its limitless capacities. And then only, when he has climbed up to the pinnacle of his own 'grey matter', will he realize that the source of life lies beyond to gaze of the intellect.

Here we find an enthusiastic and intelligent student at the feet of the Vedantic master making his despairing and vain attempt to understand Reality through his intellect. He is consistently asking the same question which the scientists have been asking eternally in their laboratories, 'Whence is the *prana* born?' To hunt for the cause of every

effect that we meet with is the only method open to the intellect in its attempts to conceive or understand a thing. Keeping in view what we know of the *prana*, as the Total Energy presiding over *matter*, we must realise that the student is now asking what the source of *energy* is?

The question leads us to realms where the Einsteins and Newtons never dared to peep into. Modern science considers itself fulfilled when it comes to the borderlines of *energy*, and has not yet dared to enquire still further or to investigate the source of all *energy*. Here the Vedantic textbook starts with this very question. Seekers do not hesitate, however mighty the intellectual challenge may be, but they pursue investigating and enquiring into the phenomenon until they reach pure wisdom and true knowledge. The student not only wants to understand the source of *energy* but also asks how exactly this universal *energy* comes to be clapped within this body.

This enquiry proceeds on to the exact method through which the main *energy* in the body is itself dividing into different departments of distinct activities. Again, we see that after some time every mortal body is deserted by the *prana*, and the student here enquires also how this energising nucleus of activity happens to get divorced from the body.

In short, the question in its pregnant suggestions covers a long range of knowledge and enquiry. The full import of it will be clear to us when we go exhaustively into the answer given by the great master.

तस्मै स होवाचातिप्रश्नान्पृच्छसि।
ब्रह्मनिषठोऽसीति तस्मात्तेऽहं ब्रवीमि॥ २ ॥

Tasmai sa hovaacha-atiprasnaan prichchasi.
Bramanishto-seeti tasmaat-te-ham braveemi

(2)

He replied, 'You ask questions touching the transcendental matter. Because you are a sincere enquirer and a good practioner in the spiritual values, I will explain it to you.'

It is often the case with all enthusiasts who reach the feet of a master not to realise exactly the implication of their own impulsive questions. It is then the duty of the teacher first of all to make the enquirer fully alive to the entire depth and the full significance of his own question. The same is done here by Pippalada. He says that your question being an enquiry into the very source of *energy*, you are asking for a factor

which is not within the limited finite scope of material science. The question takes us to the realms beyond. If the answer is to be given the teacher will have to discuss about the Pure Consciousness which can be comprehended only through realising a state transcending the body, mind and intellect.

Such a theme, if discussed all of a sudden with a disciple who was not mature enough to appreciate it, would be a sheer waste of time and as such the great scientists of life, the rishis, used to refuse to hold such discussions with unfit students, i.e., those unripe in their understanding. This is not to be understood as intellectual tyranny or as a spiritual 'copyright' claim as it is now understood in the unseen competition and rivalry between the *Brahmin* and the non-*Brahmin* sects in this country. This poisonous interpretation is itself the very venom of the decadence. The rishis understood, in their most tolerant and liberal view, that to teach the great Truth to unprepared students was to waste the time of both the teacher and the taught. Thus, to serve the disciples more efficiently he advised them to prepare themselves and discussed with them these themes only when he found that the students had become fit for initiation.

Here Pippalada has tested the boys and, in his one year's contact with them, understood that they are well-established in their mental and intellectual qualities of concentration and diligence in pursuit of the necessary knowledge of the primary lessons, and detachment from the life of the senses. Truly sincere, heroically adventurous, fully discriminative, large-hearted and full of faith in the great and divine destiny of man, these students proved to be the fittest seekers. And so Pippalada says, '*I will explain to thee.*'

By this conversation the *Sruti* is warning both the teachers and the taught against any hasty dash into spiritualism and insists upon the urgency and importance of early *sadhana* in truthfulness, austerity, self-control and faith.

आत्मन एष प्राणो जायते।
यथैषा पुरुषे च्छायैतस्मिन्नेतदाततं
मनोकृतेनाऽऽयात्यस्मिञ्शरीरे ॥ ३ ॥

Amtmana esha praano jaayate
Yathaisha purushe chchaya-

This *Prana* is born of the *Atman*. As shadow is born of the man, so is the *Prana* of the
By the action of the mind it enters into this body.

Answering the questions one by one the master readily gives this sacred thought which forms the core of the *Upanishad*. The very first question was, 'From where does the *energy (prana)* rise up?' We already know that *energy* and *matter* are nothing but the *Hiranyagarbha*, the Total Mind. Thus, the question re-stated would be, 'From where does the mind rise?' The answer given here is that it rises up from the *Atman* or the Pure Conscious centre in us, which is the life spark in each individual.

To say that something is born out of this spiritual centre would be a false philosophical statement since the cause will have to die away to become the effect. The gold piece must get itself destroyed in becoming the chain round your beloved's neck. The seed must perish to bring forth the tree; the mother will have to destroy her maidenhood to bring forth the child. Similarly, if the *prana* were to come from the *Atman* it would be amounting to saying that the Supreme Reality has destroyed Itself to become the Total Mind, the Creator! And yet, the *guru* was compelled to make this statement as a direct answer to this plain and pointed question.

Because of this philosophical contradiction implied in the statement 'This *prana* is born out of the *Atman*,' the rishi is compelled to add, almost in the same breath as it were, a clarification and explain that the *prana* is to the *Atman* what the reflection is to a person. Reflection or shadow is certainly caused by the object but at the same time the object is not reduced or tampered with because its shadow has emerged out of it.

Similarly, the ego-centre concept in us, the *prana*, is but the reflection of Pure Consciousness or Life in our mind and intellect. We have already pointed out that mind is that mysterious nothing which assumes for itself a certain stature and gesture when thoughts consistently flow, one after another, in our bosom. The Pure Life in us—Consciousness or Awareness—when it works through this 'flow of thoughts', 'expresses itself in a 'reflection' (Shadow) which is the

egocentric personality that we come to recognise almost always as ourselves. This ego-centre is always conditioned by the texture of our thoughts and the quality of their flow. When sad thoughts are flowing the ego—'I'—sad; when joyous thoughts are gliding down the avenues of the mind, life reflected therein, the ego—'I'—is happy and joyous. If the thoughts are criminal the 'I' becomes the criminal; if the thoughts are godly the 'I' becomes godly.

Thus, this ego-centre has been created certainly out of the *Atman* but at the same time the ego has not got any independent existence apart from the divine spark, our own Self. In the language of the rishis, briefly stated, it becomes, '*Prana is the shadow of the Atman.*'

When you are looking at a mirror, if the reflection grinning at you looks more like a monkey than a human being, you have only to congratulate yourself! A reflection cannot improve upon the original; it is always a faithful reflection of the object when the reflecting medium is plain and smooth. As such, if the ego-centre in us looks almost divine in its activity and dynamism, capabilities and capacities, achievements and possibilities, it is because the glorious Eternal Self is the object that is getting reflected in our mind and intellect equipment. While travelling in a train, if you happen to consult the mirror in the toilet you may feel that your nose and ears have independent movements of their own! Looking at the wagging nose, none of us need get frightened; for, we certainly know that this movement of our nose is caused by the shaking of the mirror! In fact, the reflection entirely depends upon the reflecting medium: if the mind and intellect are without dirt and steady, the reflection should be true to the original.

At the dressing table, the triple mirrors will give you a set of three different reflections of your single form sitting on the dressing stool. Just because three distinct reflections have been 'caused' by you, you have not lost anything! Similarly, the Pure Awareness reflecting in our mind and thereby creating the ego-centre has not destroyed Itself: as a seed the ego bring forth the tree of *samsara*.

In this Brahmana we have the answer to the next question also, which enquires into the manner in which the *prana* has come to get itself housed as an active centre within our own body. It has come to express itself in this body owing to willing or wishing or desiring, which are all activities of the mind. When a cup is placed in the midday sun and some water is steadily poured into it well all know that we will have a reflection of the sun in the cup of water. Looking at that water, if we are

to wonder how the sun came into the cup, the only answer we can give is that it is created by the water. They alone understand the statement who can follow the argument; there may be some who would wonder how water can 'create' the sun! Well, nobody can help them.

Water, in fact, never 'created' the sun. The water in the cup has become a reflecting surface and all reflecting surfaces must reflect the objects in front of them. So too had the *Atman* 'created' the *prana* when the mind, a reflecting medium, came to be apparently constituted in front of it.

In this stanza you must understand that the word *prana* is the ego-centre and *not* the rhythmic business of taking in and giving out of air. The next question which the student asks is: how the ego-centre gets its works done through the various energy sub-stations (*upa-pranas*) located throughout the domain of the body. The following *Brahmana* explains this and gives us an idea of the entire scheme of activity within.

यथा सप्राडेवाधिकृतान्विनियुङ्क्ते।
 एतात्प्रमानेतानग्रमानधितिष्ठस्वेत्येमेवैष प्राणः
 इतरान्प्राणान्प्रथक्प्रथगेव संनिधत्ते॥ ४ ॥

Yathaa samraad-eva-adhikritaana viniyunkte.
Etaan graamaan etaan graamaan ahitishtasva,
iti-evam-eva-isha praanaah;
itaraan praanaan prithak prithageva samnidhatte.

(4)

As the king appoints his officers saying to them, 'Reside here and govern these villages,' so does the Ego (*Prana*) assign the other assistant *Pranas* each to its separate department of activity.

The nucleus of all activities and energy in the body is the ego-centre (*ahankar*) which gets its work done by the *upa-pranas* just as the emperor or the chief minister gets his work done through the other ministers, and each one of the ministers in turn gets his work accomplished through the various departments of activity located at different provinces.

The main activities of the body together constitute what is generally known as the *activities of the living man*, and they can all be classified

under five different categories. It is to show these categories that we have started the discussion here. In this chapter we will be getting a description of the various *pranas* and their respective allocation of duties.

As the king appoints his governors and collectors in the various provinces of his domination to administer the allotted subdivisions of districts, so also here the ego-centre is distributing its work to the various *upa-pranas*. Each *prana* has got its own definite jurisdiction and its department works strictly in obedience to a sacred law. Each department permanently functions from its headquarters fixed at a definite point in the body.

From the analogy we must also note, the officers who are looking after their duties and administering the areas allocated to their jurisdiction do not act for their own sake but for the glory of the king or the State. Similarly here, the *upa-pranas* are functioning in the various provinces of the body to contribute the maximum to the total exchequer of experiences gained by the ego-centre. the *chief prana*.

पायूपस्थेऽपानं चक्षुः श्रोत्रे मुखनासिकाभ्यां प्राणः
स्वयं प्रतिष्ठते मध्ये तु समानः । एष ह्येतद्भुतमन्नं
समं नयति तस्माद्येताः सप्तार्चिषो भवन्ति॥ ५ ॥

*Paayoopasthe-apaanam, chakshuh-srotre
mukha-naasikaabhyaam praanah;
svayam pratishthate madhye tu samaanah.
Esha hyetat-hutam-annam samam-nayati,
tasmaad-etaah sapta-archisho bhavanti.*

(5)

The *Apana* dwells in the organs of excretion and procreation; and the *Prana* abides in the eye, mouth and nose. In the middle this *Samana* functions, distributing the food equally, and the seven flames are fed from it.

Here the rishi giving a list of names of different *prana*-officers and the location of their individual 'district head-quarters', which together give us a definite hint as to their respective functions.

The *apana* resides in the organs of action for ejecting things from the body and, naturally, it works mainly in the pelvic region. Its main fields of activity are the anus and the reproductive canal. The *prana* functions in the face, mainly in the eyes, ears and nose, and is mainly responsible

for the instruments of knowledge functioning with efficiency and effectiveness.

Thus in the upper extremity the *prana* functions and in the lower portion the *apana* is active. In the area between these two provinces, mainly constituted by the belly, we have the *samana* which functions in digesting the food materials swallowed down and in distributing the nutritious essence equally and efficiently to all parts of the body. If and part of the body is particularly overworked it is the duty of the *samana* to see that food is rushed to that area and in this the *samana* is much more efficient than any of the known food departments that are working now in the modern world States.

In our world today if any minister or officer were to carry out his allotted duties as per 'standing orders', he is considered to be very efficient and is often congratulated. But the tradition in the body 'politic' is something different. Merely fulfilling one's allotted duties is not sufficient in itself. An officer can be considered efficient only when he, in executing his own departmental obligations, provides something to the total State in terms of greater national welfare and greater happiness to the people. This is clearly indicated here when the rishis say that as a result of the untiring activities of the *samana*, '*the seven flames proceed from it*'.

Passages such as these without commentaries would read like antiquated and meaningless thoughts which need restatements. The 'seven flames'* meant here are the seven main holes in a man's head: two ears, two eyes, two nostrils and the mouth. Through each one of them, as it were, a peculiar kind of special light shoots out which can illumine only one particular type of sense objects in the world. Thus with the eyes we can illumine only the 'forms' in things. A deaf man can only see the musician's mouth folding in contortions but cannot hear even a single note. The ears can illumine only sound. You may see a cake (*laddu*) and hear it spoken of a hundred times, yet you will not know the taste of it, for, taste can be recognised only by that 'beam of light' that emerges from the tongue.

To consider these powers of preception as 'seven flames emerging through the seven holes' in the cranium is so poetic an expression and so

* Refer Swamiji's *Discourses on Mundakopnishad*, 2-1.8.

scientific a statement that it needs no extra commentary.

हृदि ह्येष आत्मा। अत्रैतदेकशतं नाडीनां।
तासां शतं शतमेकैकस्यां द्वासप्ततिर्द्वासप्ततिः
प्रतिशाखानाडीसहसतराणि भवन्त्यासु व्यानश्चरति॥६॥

*Hridi hyesha Aatmaa. Atraitad-ekasatam naadeenaam,
taasaam satam satam-ekaikasyaam dvaasaptatir-
dvaasaptatih, pratisakhaa-naadeesaharsaani
bhavantyaasu vyaana-scharati.* (6)

This *Atman* is in the heart. There, three are a hundred and one 'nevers'. Each of them has a hundred branch. Again, every one of these has seventytwo thousand sub-branches. In these the *Vyana* moves.

The word *Atman* is used here in this *Brahmana* not in the sense of the Supreme Reality which, being the all-pervadin factor, cannot be localised at a particular point in the body; here the *Atman* is used to denote the ego-centre. The Supreme Consciousness conditioned by the mind, intellect and body is called the ego-centre. In this *Brahmana* the teacher is suddenly changing the topic as though for a new discussion; but this is only an apparent change: he is only using a new terminology. So far we have been having a discussion of the *prana* in us dividing itself into the five departments of office. All of a sudden here we have a statement. '*This Atman is in the heart.*' Naturally, what the rishi means is, '*This prana resides in the heart.*'

If the ego-centre itself is the *prana* why should the teacher all of a sudden change the terminology? In this we have a really great technique of teaching worked out so as to hold the attention of the students continuously towards the discourse. This in itself is the fine art of teaching. The rishis have always exhibited a creditable mastery over this benevolent art of teaching. At such a psychological moment, by using a different terminology, he is not only checking us whether all the students are fully following him or not, but also providing an occasion to the students themselves to gather their wandering minds back again to the main topic and sharpen their attention a little more.

Here, the word 'heart' is used not in the sense of the physical organ thudding in our bosom on the left side of the chest. The term denotes only the 'mind'. Pure Consciousness reflected in the mind is the

ego-centre, and to say that the ego is in the 'heart' is as much true as to say that my face is in the mirror.

The *Brahmana* goes on to inform us that from this 'heart' hundred and one 'nerves' branch off. We have already seen that the 'heart' is the mind; the mind is the subtle sheath made up of our thoughts. Therefore, the nerves that emerge out of it cannot be the same as the nerves of the doctor's conception. Nerves here (*nadis*) are subtler than the finest capillaries in the circulatory system in the body and they can be more appropriately described as 'astral tubes.'

Thus, from the mind hundred and one different 'astral tubes' emerge out and each one of these 'primary nerves' (*mukhya*) divides into hundred sub-divisions (*Sakha nadis*) forming among themselves ten thousand one hundred secondary *nadis*. Now each one of these secondary *nadis* again multiplies into seventy-two thousand branches, thus together forming a system of seventy-two crores, seventy-two lakhs, ten thousand two hundred and one in all (72, 72, 10, 201).

The idea of any factor, which in itself is as subtle as thought, divided so minutely as to form over seventy-two crores, is a conception which has not yet been equalled even in these days of electron microscopes. Today, magnifying a thing one or one and a half lakhs times is considered to be a stupendous achievement of the brave new world.

In this network of 'astral tubes' we are told that the *Vyana sakti* moves like a permanent cyclone round the structure of man. Among many other functions of the *vyana* is to keep the circulation of blood always going even in the minutest capillary where the red and the white corpuscles will have to be on the move all the time.

अथैकयोर्ध्व उदानः पुण्येन पुण्यं लोकं नयति।
पापेन पापमुभाभ्यामेव मनुष्यलोकम्॥ ७ ॥

Athaikayordhva udaanah
punyena punyam lokam nayati.
Paapena paapam,
ubhaabhyaam-eva manushyalokam

(7)

Again, through one special 'nerve', the *Udana*, ascending, leads us upward to the virtuous world by good work, and carries us to the lower worlds by sinful acts, and takes us to the world of men when sin and virtue are mixed.

Udana is the lot of the officers appointed by the ego in order to do a special function for the body 'politic' and this department is located in one of the *nadis* called in the *Yoga Sastra as sushumna*.^{*} Since Vedantic literature is not very much concerned with this method of developing the human personality, here the rishi is not expounding the theory completely. He only mentions that the *udana* goes up 'through one spinal nerve'.

The function of the *udana* in the government of the body is something like that of the minister for transport. It is the *udana* that provides the fuel or the motive force for the subtle body to move out of the physical structure, at the moment of its death, towards its next field of activity. We had earlier discussed how the *udana* conducts the ego, and we need not go into it again here. However, the mind with intellect, when once divorced from the physical body, that is, released from its cage, becomes free to move anywhere it pleases.

For example, we, sitting here in our seats, can send our thoughts to our homes or to any distant place which we have known before. As soon as we think of a place, our thoughts, as it were, reach those points but, unfortunately, we remain here because thoughts cannot lift our matter envelopment. Once, therefore, the thoughts get completely realised from the body, since they have no gross weight, they must reach that which they happen to think about.

Thus, at the time of death, as a perfect resultant of all the different kinds of thoughts and motives that we have been entertaining during the past, our mind thinks of a fit world, and it being nothing but a flock of swift-winged thoughts, it reaches that arena. The motive force by which the thought thus reaches its object of thinking is provided by the *udana* power in us.

It cannot be any exaggeration, if we understand it properly, to say that the *udana* is the 'cultural resultant' gained during our mental life. If our thoughts all through our life were low and gross, propelled by animal instincts, selfish wishes and low motives, certainly the resultant would be a pull on the mind to move towards such an animal life, and the *Sastra* say that it is the *udana* that will then lead us to the lower realms of the animal life desired by us. If, on the other hand, our thoughts were higher and nobler, the consequent greatness of culture in us would be,

* Refer *Maitri Upanishad*, 6-21.

as it were, pulling us towards the higher planes of greater evolutionary status and existence. If one, from boyhood on wards, had been meditating upon criminality, then for all the tuition and education the father may squander on him, he cannot become an honest and cultured citizen, he, by his thoughts, has chalked out for himself a successful career as a gaol-bird.

Man has been given the licence to make or to unmake himself. This is the glory that has come to us because we have been provided with the 'power of discrimination', which neither the animal nor the plant life has got. The lions must necessarily kill the deer because to kill is an instinct with them. A tree must unconsciously shelter everyone under its branches, not because it is very hospitable, but because it is incapable of doing anything other than what it has been appointed to do. In those lower strata of existence life seems to be governed by only the self-preservation instinct. But coming to the status of man, as he has been provided with the 'power of discrimination', he is no more a victim of his instincts but he can, if he wants, rise above the low animal tendencies and come to claim a perfect mastery over himself. But if a man has thus got this special privilege it is accompanied by some special duties also. Thus, his life is not to be lived merely according to the *Principle of self-preservation* but he must build his life upon the *principle of preserving the self*.

Here it is said he *Udana* takes the ego-centre wrapped up in the subtle body to the higher worlds of a greater happiness or to the lower worlds of a graver sorrow, according to the balance sheet declared by the mind and intellect at the time of its quitting its present physical body. When the tendencies are *almost* equal and opposite, and therefore the 'balance' *almost* nil, the individual is given another lease of life in the very world as a human being to make or unmake himself. This principle governing the law of reincarnation has been just hinted at here because an exhaustive thesis upon it was not necessary in *those* days when the teacher taught the students who were already well-versed in these preliminaries.

आदित्यो ह वै बाह्यः प्राण उदयत्येष
ह्येनं चाक्षुषं प्राणमनुगृह्णानः। पृथिव्यां या
देवता सैषा पुरुषस्यापानमवष्टभ्यान्तरा
यदाकाशः स समानो वायुर्व्यानः॥ ८ ॥

*Aadityo ha vai baahyah praanah udayati-
 esha/hyenam chaakshusham praanam-anugrihnaanaah.
 Prithivyaam yad/devataa, saishaa purushasya-
 apaanam-avashtabhya-antaraa/yadaakaasah,
 sa samaano vaayuryaanaah.* (8)

The Sun is verily the cosmic *Prana* in the eye. The Goddess of Earth attracts or controls the *Apana* towards her. The space between the Earth and the Sun is the *Samana*. The wind is the *Vyana*.

We have already noticed in an earlier discussion in explaining the *Vaisvānara** that the individual himself, projected and magnified, is the total; the microcosm (*vyashti*) is the macrocosm (*samashti*). As such, there must be in the outer world of totality points representing our own inner personalities and the activities within us. Here in this *Brahmana* Pippalada suggests points in the cosmos where we can see the same *pranic* forces that the functioning in us, enlarged and extended.

Herein we have a typical example of an *upasana*, a technique of self-integration, which was very much prevalent in the Vedic period. *Upasana* is a method by which we seek to see an idea with a greater message in an ideal which is comparatively gross and seemingly insignificant. Subjectively, the rishis have indicated to us the various centres of activities within our structure in terms of the five *pranic* headquarters. In the outer world we know the various objects of the phenomenal world and yet, until we are instructed, we do not see in the outer world a replica of our own inner existence.

To indicate to the students his relationship between the inner and the outer worlds and to train seekers to discover for themselves the inner world splashed out on the map of the total cosmic form, a method of *upasana* is advocated by the rishis and pursued liberally by all spiritual aspirants of that era. In fact, the word *bhakti* is never used in the entire literature of the Vedas and yet, the glory of Vyasa is that, through his *Puranas*, he has rewritten for us the technique of *upasana* in the language of *bhakti* on the leaves of our love-emotions, with tears of joy flowing from our own hearts.

Upasana or *bhakti* is an unavoidable staff in the hands of every seeker trekking the path of Truth to the pinnacle of Self-experience. As such, we find that however short an *Upanishad* may be, more than a third of its contents is spent in advising some methods of *Upasana*. The

* See Query I, *Brahmana* 7, p. 32.

idea seems to be, as it suggests to every intelligent reader, that even while one has come to the higher stage of philosophic contemplation and *Samadhi* practices, one cannot afford to leave off *upasana* totally. Your grandfather, even at the ripe age of seventy-two, daily sharpened his twenty-six-year old faithful razor before shaving! He was very wise.

To keep the mind and intellect trim and steady, *upasana* is the method and however established one may be in Truth Consciousness, conscious *abhyas* of one type or another cannot be totally avoided. Those who cry down this truth are only 'educated illiterates' in Vedic parlance. Veda being the science of Self-perfection, a mere study of it makes up only a 'learned fool'. In *Prasnopanishad* we find that Pippalada has punctuated his philosophical discourses in more than four different places to advise us on one method of *upasana* or the other.

This attempt to discover the individual in the Total in Vedanta—the me in thee—in *bhakti* is a process by which our own mind and intellect, now chained and shackled with its own planes of the vaster and more extensive fields of the universe. Thereby the mind becomes expanded and in this process the dirt and mud in it drop off just as cotton is cleaned by carding it. Only such a purified mind, capable of expanding beyond ordinary capacities, can renounce its gross density and thus soar higher into the greater heights of God-vision and Self-experience.

Here we are told that the *prana* is verily the Sun; this had already been discussed in the first chapter* where rishi Pippalada explained that the Total Mind or the Creator Himself became the *prana* (energy) and *rayi* (matter). He explained that 'the Sun is the *prana*.' While discoursing upon those *Brahmanas* we had exhausted this topic. But here we have added information for purposes of easier mediation. We are told that the *prana* functioning in the ear, eye and mouth, with its headquarters located in the head is the Sun in the outer world, the point of comparison between the two being that the Sun reigns in the crown of the world and the *prana* is located in the topmost point in an individual's physical structure. Again, the *prana* functions in the eye, and we have already seen how the Sun, as the 'source of all light', is the presiding deity of the instrument of vision, the eye.

The *apana* which functions in the pelvic region of the body has necessarily an activity tending downwards, pushing down things and

* See Query I, *Brahmanas* 4 and 5, pp. 24-30.

ejecting them from the body; it is the power that functions behind excretion and insemination. Thus the direction of its flow is certainly downwards. This *Apana vritti* in the cosmic form cannot be better represented than in the gravitational pull by which everything on the globe is attracted towards its own centre. In the language of the rishi it is not said that the earth attracts, but 'the Goddess of Earth attracts.'

It is certainly revealing how these antiquated, prehistoric Vedic rishis living their life of strange renunciation and with seemingly no scientific aptitude, barbarous in every respect, eating with hands and wearing no shoes—not even educated in holding the fork and knife correctly—could express the truth that Newton discovered when an apple fell on his nose and made him think! As students of modern science, nay, as great devotees in the temple of science, should we not better accept Pippalada to be a modern saint who must have come into the world to declare the *Prasnopanishad* only after the time of Newton, when gravitational force had already become a theme in our textbooks in India. We must do something about this, or else we will have to swallow the insufferable truth that our rishis knew in prehistoric times what Newton discovered only a few centuries ago!

This and a host of other similar, scientific statements are hinted at all over the scriptures. Either we have to declare that the *Upanishads* are modern books compiled in, say, 1954 and that we are studying the first edition, or perhaps, to be more authentic, we have to postdate and declare that the *Upanishads* belong to, say A.D. 1999! All these paradoxes arise because we are not ready to accept the obvious fact that Vedanta had emerged as a philosophy of life when the Hindu generation of the Vedic period had exhausted themselves in their scientific enquiry and discoveries. At the farthest end of the laboratory is the arch of wisdom through which the Vedantist walks out to reach the fields of true religion and eternal philosophy. In this sense a true Vedantist will not condemn or look down upon the developments of the material sciences; but at the same time, it is also true that he will not allow his grey matter to fume up into smoky confusions because of undue excitement at the discoveries of science.

After the above advice to the student to identify the *prana* in him with the Sun in the cosmic form, and the *apana* with the gravitational force in the phenomenal world, the rishi explains that the *samana* in us is represented in the outer world in the cosmic atmosphere that lies

between the Sun and the Earth. Just as in us the *Samana* maintains the nutrition and healthy life of all the cells in the body, we know that it is atmospheric air that upholds life in all created beings. If the atmosphere is *samana*, then the *vyana* in us can be fully identified with the wind in the outer world.

This method of *upasana* is not only beneficial to the seeker in expanding himself and becoming subtler, but even to the 'library student' of the *Upanishads* it gives a vivid and clear class-room map describing completely and providing fully an objective representation of this highly subjective theme. The earth, the sun, the atmosphere and the wind together give us the picture of the relative positions and functions of the *prana*, *apana*, *samana* and *vyana* in us.

तेजो ह वै उदानस्तस्मादुपशान्ततेजाः ।
पुनर्भवमिन्द्रियैर्मनसि संपद्यमानैः ॥ ९ ॥

Tejo ha vai udaanah tasmaad-upasaanta tejaah.
Punarbhavam-indriyai-rmanasi sampadyamaanaih.

The external fire indeed is *Udana*. Therefore, he in whom the flames are gone out enters another body with the senses absorbed in the mind.

In the above description the fifth *upa-prana* was not explained at all. This *Brahmana* is dedicated to the explanation of the place of the *udana* in the outer world *Udana*, as we have seen, is that energy which supplies the motive power for an ego-centre with its subtle body to move out from one physical structure to another at the time of its death in the existing physical form. Nothing in the outer world could have explained this function of *udana* so well as the example given by the rishi, namely fire. Fire is invoked on different occasions by different means and no two flames look the same since the manifested fire depends for its form and intensity upon the fuel that is used. So long as the fuel is supplied, the fire at the given spot has a manifested shape and it can be employed in serving the purposes of the world. But when the fuel is burnt and the fire finds no more material for it to consume, it passes from its manifested condition into its unmanifested stage.

Similarly, when a subtle body finds that it has no more experiences to gather in a given physical form that subtle form throws away its physical structure and departs. With reference to the body, this

condition after its divorce from the subtle body, is called the death of the body. But the ego-centre, though not manifest and functioning through the body, exists in its subtle form. The subtle ego-centre set in the subtle body is conveyed to its next field of activity (*loka*) by the energy called the *udana*. The brilliant 'subjective scientists' of the Vedic period alone could discover such a fitting representation of the *udana* in the cosmic chessboard of universal existence.

'With his senses absorbed in the mind'—At the time of death, it is universally observed, that the dying man slowly and steadily loses all his sense activities and capacities: he no more sees, hears, smells, tastes or feels. This is not because these instruments of cognition have become defective but the power or strength of perception, meaning the *pranic* vitality in the sense organs, has withdrawn from these sense organ centres. We have been already told that the chief *prana*, the 'shadow' of the *Atman*, the ego-centre, has himself appointed different *upa-pranas* to execute their respective duties in the different centres of the body.

When the ego-centre with the subtle body is preparing to quit the physical body he gathers all his different assistants before making his exit: when the visitor has gathered his coat, gloves, hat and umbrella it is certain that he will soon be going out through the front door. Here the *Upanishad* is explaining that the sense organs, meaning the sense capacities, are withdrawn unto itself by the mind* before the *udana* lifts it from the dying body and guides it along to its next field of activity.

The description of the *udana* as the external 'fire', apart from the above-mentioned philosophical significance, has a plain and obvious truth in it which provides a complete similarity between the two. So long as the *udana* exists in the human form the man is alive, and so long as the man is alive there is a body-warmth in him. When the *udana* leaves, the heat alone is gone; a dead body is cold to the touch. Thus, we can say that a dead body is a thing in which the flames have died out or the fire has gone off.

सच्चित्तस्तेनैष प्राणमायाति प्राणस्तेजसा युक्तः ।
सहाऽऽत्मना यथासंकल्पितं लोकं नयति ॥ १० ॥

* The same idea is expounded in *Geeta*, XV-8.

*Yachitta-stenaisha praanam-aayaati
prana-stejasaa yuktah. Sahaatmanaa,
yathaa sankalpitam lokam nayati.*

Whatever be his thoughts, accordingly he attains the *Prana*, and the *Prana*, united with *Udana*, together with *Jivatma*, is led on to the world thought of.

In the last *Brahmana* we are told that the mind withdrawing the senses into itself is guided by the *udana* to its next field of activity (*loka*). Certainly, a doubt would come as to who determines the next field. He *Sastra* goes into the problem exhaustively and makes conclusive statements. It says that the departing thoughts on the deathbed determine the future field for the ego-centre to function. This does not mean that we all can afford to live a thoughtless life of excesses and cruelties all through and hoodwink the universal law by keeping to ourselves great and noble thoughts in the end! There are no trespassers wandering into Truth; never hope to smuggle yourself across the frontiers of the finite into the Infinite. Eternal law is quite foolproof; and the *devatas* in charge of its execution are beyond all temptations!

Nobody can thus smuggle himself into the greater domains in the evolutionary scheme. The last thought on the deathbed no longer depends upon our own independent willing and wishing, but is at that moment an irresistible declaration of the resultant of the entire thought-life that we have been indulging in throughout our lives.

To declare a profit and therefore more dividend is, no doubt, the sign of a great business success of the year, but no businessman would ever be un-businesslike throughout the year and still expect to declare a large profit at the close of the year. The balance sheet at the end depends upon the individual business items undertaken; no one has any control over the final statement of accounts at the last moment. Just as profit is the resultant of the 'profits and losses', so too, at the time of death, the individual's last thought can only be determined by the resultant or the balance sheet of the entire thought-life, 'good and bad,' he has lived.

Thus, if we dedicate all our life to earning and procuring, eating and breeding, certainly our parting thoughts can never be about any greater spiritual life or about moving towards a higher evolution, but they can only be about food and women, money and deception, murder and loot; and as such we are apt to be guided to a 'field' wherein we can fulfil these demands without even the minimum unavoidable restraints that

we have had to accept, as men living in a modern town; at least for fear of the policeman!

This idea of the 'last thought' determining or giving an indication of the next life the man is to take is indicated in all our great textbooks* and to a large extent this is the suggestion in all the religions of the world, whether rebirth is conceded therein explicitly or tacitly. Thus, the 'last thought' determines and declares the exact life and destiny the 'ego-centre' (*prana*) is to live out in its next incarnation.

The ego-centre, thus propelled by the *udana*, is the *jivatma* which is led to its next field of activity according to its own willing and desiring, determined and declared by itself with its last thoughts. The new world to which the ego-centre is directed need not necessarily mean that there are different worlds in the sense in which we understand the word. In Sanskrit, *loka* in its etymological content means only a field of experiences, may be in the world of the animals or in the world of the flora or in the world of super-sensuous enjoyment, as heaven, etc.

य एवं विद्वन्प्राणं वेद । न हास्य प्रजा
हीयन्तेऽमृतो भवति तदेष श्लोकः ॥ ११ ॥

Ya evam vidwaan praanam veda.
Na haasya prajaa heeyante,
amrito bhavati, tadesha slokah.

(11)

The wise man who knows the *Prana* thus will not have to suffer—his offsprings do not perish and he becomes immortal; there is the following verse.

No method of *upasana* is generally advised in the *Upanishad* without giving the fruits thereof; this is mainly done in order to encourage the seekers to follow the path of *upasana* until they develop their powers of mental and intellectual perception. It serves as something like our modern days' advertisement slogans—for the methods of *upasana*.

All possible desires of man have been classified under three headings by the *Sastra*: desire for offspring, desire for wealth and desire for

* Refer *Geeta*, VIII-6: There also it is endorsed that the last thoughts of a dying man determine his future incarnation.

glory. Of them, the desire for offspring includes all relationships that exist in our social and domestic life. Here the rishi says that he who meditates upon the truth—that one's own microcosmic form with its activity centres is but a miniature universe with its cosmic forces in the macrocosm—will find relationships in the world to be always intimate and many. This is, to large extent, psychologically true since the method of concentration suggested makes the practitioner expand in his mental and intellectual outlook. He thereby develops a large heart and a very cosmopolitan intellect and these are certainly qualities which attract towards the individual the admiration, love and regard of his fellow beings almost automatically and irresistibly.

Even this particular statement regarding the benefits accrued by such a meditator is not Pippalada's own idea but he quotes the corresponding *Rig-Veda mantra* which clearly declares the same. The following is the *mantra*.

उत्पत्तिमायाति स्थानं विभुत्वं चैव पञ्चधा
अध्यात्मं चैव प्राणस्य विज्ञायामृतमश्नुते ।
विज्ञायामृतमश्नुत इति ॥ १२ ॥

*Utpattim-aayatim sthaanam
vibhuttvam chaiva panchadhaa.
Adhyaatmam chaiva praanasya
vijnaaya amritam-asnute;
vijanaaya-amritam-asnuta iti.*

(12)

He who knows the Origin, the Entry, the Seat, the fivefold distribution of the *Prana* and the internal state in the body, obtains immortality; yes, he attains immortality.

A vedic *mantra* is quoted here by rishi Pippalada in support of his conclusion contained in this *Brahmana*. This *mantra* not only provides the rishi with a very apt conclusion for the chapter, but also justifies the very *Brahmana Upanishad*. The whole chapter deals with a detailed explanation of this *mantra*

'*He who knows*'— In Vedanta 'knowing' is not a mere intellectual appreciation or mental grasp of a theme, but means 'realizing'. Through long and consistent meditation, when an individual comes to realize that the *pranic* centres in himself have corresponding realities in the cosmic

from, he becomes 'immortal'. This immortality is only relative; the individual thereby comes to experience his perfect identity with the Total Mind, the *Hiranya-garbha*, and remains one in identification (*abhiman*) with the Creator until the end of this creation-cycle. Compared with the short and finite nature of the mortal, the state of the Total Mind-hood (*Hiranya-garbha avastha*) is certainly a state of immortality in a relative sense.

HERE ENDS THE THIRD PRASNA

QUERY IV

GARGYA AND PIPPALADA

IN THE last chapter we had a perfect analysis of the various centres of activities in the body and earlier we had found how the students enquired and completely ascertained the nature of the outer world and the nature of the body before they entered into a discussion over the powers within the body. Having thus wandered into the level of the *prana* the steps of the enquiring intellect must enter the next interior hall within our personality or being, to inspect and analyse it. In this question one students seek and strive to understand the core of existence, the Truth, which is the Reality behind the individual and the cosmos.

No other existing school of philosophy in the world today considers life so thoroughly in all its totality as Vedanta insists upon and pursues in its deliberations. All other philosophies examine and analyse only the experiences of the waking state and its world, and on the basis of these intelligent conclusions they certainly draw great philosophical truths, but these must necessarily be incomplete since they constitute but a partial view point. Life is not merely the experiences of the waking state; every human being has got his quota of experiences in the dream state and in the deep sleep state also. Life in its totality must include the experiences of the waking, of the dream and of the deep sleep states. And Vedanta is perhaps the only philosophy wherein they take a deep and consistent scientific interest in observing, analysing and codifying these experiences in their theories on the eternal Truth.

In the scientific process of thinking which we pursue in philosophy, a seeker hunting for the fundamentals of life must necessarily observe and comprehend life as a whole. Thus, we had in the first three questions a thorough and complete discussion of the waking-state world constituted

of the pluralistic phenomena, the body and the *prana*. The experiencer or the enjoyer of life is the 'subject', and the Vedanta-student realizes that in spite of a world of phenomena ready to provide experiences, until the experiencer, the ego, comes in contact with the world of objects no experience is caused. Life being a series of experiences, an enquiry into the nature of the ego-centre becomes unavoidable in any scientific analysis of life as such.

Here the disciple, warming himself up to the true spirit of discussion, is asking how exactly is the ego-centre functioning in man in the deep sleep state, etc. In this chapter we get a thorough explanation of the seemingly different personalities in ourselves, experienced as the 'waker', the 'dreamer' and the 'deep sleeper.' The whole discussion is rounded up by an enquiry into '*On what do all these depend?*'

अथ हैनं सौर्यायणी गार्ग्यः पप्रच्छ
 भगवन्नेतस्मिन्पुरुषे कानि स्वपन्ति
 कान्यस्मिन् जाग्रति कतर एष देवः
 स्वप्नान्पश्यति कस्यैतत्सुखं भवति कस्मिन्नु
 सर्वे संप्रतिष्ठिता भवन्तीति ॥ १ ॥

*Atha hainam Sauryaayani Gaargyah Papracha,
 'Bhagavan, estamind purushe kaani svapanti?
 Kaanyasmin jaagrati? Katara esha devah
 svapnaan pasyati? Kasya-etat sukham bhavati?
 Kasminnu / sarve sampratishtitaa bhavanti.'* iti

(1)

Then Gargya, the grandson of Surya, questioned him, 'O Bhagavan, What are they that sleep in man? What, again are awake? Which is the Devata who sees the dream?' Whose is this happiness? On what do all these depend?'

The question is so exhaustive that to grapple with it is to grapple with this entire chapter. But one thing that we may notice here, at the very outset, is that no positive enquiry is made regarding the waking state. It is either because in the earlier questions we had already gone into an exhaustive discussion on the world of objects and the body supported and governed by the five instruments of knowledge, or because the waking state is nothing but another type of the dream since the mechanism by which the dream and the waking are perceived is one and the same.

Thus in *Mandukya Karika*, which is the most exhaustive thesis upon this line of enquiry existing in the word, the waking and dream states are considered together as one in more than one places*. It must be in the same sense that we have here a very conclusive analysis of dream and deep sleep states without any direct reference to the waking state experiences.

When the physical body is asleep the student wants to know if there are yet any more energy centres that are still sleeplessly working for the maintenance of the body. In fact, once we fall asleep, we are not conscious of the body, and yet, as soon as we emerge out into the waking condition, our vehicle of enjoyment and suffering, namely the body, is ready there for us to claim as our own. Again, it is observed in a sleeping man that though he is not conscious of his own body, his heart functions, his digestion continues and the body keeps up its warmth. As such, independent of the sleeper, there seem to be some forces or powers that are, as it were, sleeplessly guarding the temple of life, the body. The disciple is asking the teacher as to who are these faithful guardians who continue their functions even when the sleeper has withdrawn his body consciousness into himself.

Before we enter into sleep there is again a region of experience between waking and sleep, called dream. Whatever be our condition in the waking state world, once we enter the realm of dream, it has been our experience that we are in a totally different set of circumstances. The dreamer has a life almost contrary to the life of the waker and as such an enquiry is certainly to be undertaken to find out the exact structure and nature of the dreamer in us.

Though we are not conscious of ourselves in the deep sleep state, on waking up every one of us can *remember* that we enjoyed in sleep a nameless but almost perfect bliss. Here the enquiry is as to who was the enjoyer of the bliss in us. In order to remember a thing the rememberer and the experiencer of the experience must be one and the same. And since we remember that we had enjoyed a bliss in our deep sleep state of existence, we ourselves must have been in deep sleep enjoying that bliss experience. Thus the question, though highly subtle, is completely justified, and one who is experimenting with life as such cannot avoid this enquiry, "Whose is the sleep-happiness?"

* Refer Swamiji's *Mandukya and Karika*.

Lastly, the disciple wants to know what is the substratum for these three different ego-centres that are functioning in each individual. A knowledge of gold introduces us to the knowledge of all the different ornaments made of gold, and from item to item all that we have to know is only their different shapes and forms. Similarly, there must be something common, forming the very substance of these seemingly different ego-centres functioning in us in the three planes of consciousness, which together constitute our life.

To the 'dreamer' the waking state world is non-existent and to the 'waker' the dream world is a mere delusion to be ignored and to the deep sleeper both the waking and the dream worlds are non-existent. But all the same there is some factor in me which is experiencing all the three states and yet is not identifying itself with any one of them. Unless we accept that there is a fundamental common denominator for all these different sets of experiences, we cannot explain how we can remember yesterday's waking state, last night's dream and the joy of the deep sleep that we had in the early hours of this morning. In order to remember these things we must consult with that factor in us which itself had experienced all the three and yet was not either the 'waker' or the 'dreamer' or the 'sleeper'!

The disciple is demanding here an explanation for this great all witnessing factor, ever untouched by experiences and without which no experience would have been possible. That conscious factor, the divine spark, the life centre, is the theme that is indicated by the question, 'On what do all these depend?'

तस्मै स होवाच । यथा गार्ग्य मरीचयोऽ
 र्कस्यास्तं गच्छतः सर्वा एतस्मिन्तेजोमण्डले
 एकीभवन्ति । ताः पुनः पुनरुदयतः
 प्रचरन्त्येवं ह वै तत्सर्वं परे देवे मनस्येकीभवति ।
 तेन तर्ह्येष पुरुषो नश्रृणोति न पश्यति
 न जिघ्रति न रसयते न स्पृश्यति नाभिवदते
 नादत्ते नानन्दयते न विसृजते नेयायते
 स्वपितीत्याचक्षते ॥ २ ॥

*Tasmai sa hovaacha. "Yathaa Gaargya,
 mareechayo arkasya-astam gachchhatah*

*sarvaa etasmin-tejomandale ekeebhavanti;
taah punah punarudayatah pracharanti,
evam ha vai tatsarvam pare deve
manasi ekeebhavati. Tena tarhy-asha
purusho, na srnoti, na pasyati, na jighrati,
na rasayate, na sprisyati, na-abhivadate,
na-adatte, na-anandayate, na visrjate,
neyaayate, svapiteeya-achakshate.*

(2)

He replied, 'O Gargya, just as the rays of the Sun, when he sets, become one in that disk of light and they come forth again when the sun next rises, so also all these become one in the highest Deva, the mind. Therefore, at that time, man no more hears, sees, smells tastes or feels; nor does he speak, nor take, nor enjoy, nor evacuate, nor move... and they say, 'He sleeps!

The first of the enquiries of the disciple was, 'What are the factors in that sleeping man?' This *Brahmana* gives a direct answer to it, and in enumerating the factors and faculties that retire into a dormant condition during sleep, rishi Pippalada has given to Hindu spiritual literature one of its greatest and exhaustive definitions of 'sleep'. Sleep and dream conditions have not yet been satisfactorily defined in Western psychology and they will probably have to wait till they discover for themselves an exhaustive theory and a complete explanation for the mind. But in the Hindu scriptural texts we have the most exhaustive and thoroughly scientific comprehension of mind and mental life and as such, they have given here a very satisfactory and exhaustive definition of sleep.

It must be noticed here that in this attempt at defining 'sleep' the rishis have succeeded not so much by the *positive assertions* of its qualities as by the *negative explanations* of conditions that are not sleep. This is no weakness since at the time of experiencing sleep we are not aware of a conscious and active mind and intellect and as such, the experience of sleep cannot be defined in terms of the mental and the intellectual life therein.

The waking state, as we all know, is that period of our experience when, through the instruments of cognition, we are aware of the sense objects of the world. Sleep is not the waking state; the waking state is not in the sleep. The waking state is a time when the sense organs are fully active in our physical structure. Therefore, Pippalada, in pointing out the deep sleep state to be not the waking state, says that at that time 'all the *indriyas* retire into their very source, the mind'.

Mind, we have found earlier, is the active agent behind all the sense organs. In fact, without mental contact the sense organs cannot function. In Vedic literature we find a description which says that the mind itself, expressed in terms of our physical structure, is the sense organs, and they, extended to the universe, are the five great elements. Thus viewed, the mind is the apex of a cone, the base of which is the entire cosmic existence maintained by a manipulation of both the manifest (gross) and the unmanifest (subtle) five great elements.

The real essence in the sense objects is that which is lent out to them by the mind, and therefore Pippalada says that in the deep sleep state the entire world of plurality, cognised by us through the five great windows in our structure, '*become one in the highest Deva, the Mind.*' That is to say, the powers of perception in the sense organs get withdrawn from their respective centres and get deposited as it were in the very mind.

True to the spirit of a great Hindu, here the rishi could not resist the temptation to draw a metaphor from the setting sun. Today we have come to consider imagination as a plaything, a nautch-girl of the mind catering to our amusements. But in the vedic period a poet was a seer, a revealer of hidden truths and his native language itself was poetry. Metaphor or simile was used not as an arresting embellishment for his thoughts but to serve the more serious purpose of conveying a reality, some great truth, through its dumb suggestions.

He says that just as the rays of the sun are gathered and withdrawn as it were, into the burning disc of the setting sun temporarily for the night and they emerge out into shooting beams of light again when the sun rises, so too, when one goes to sleep, the five great beams of light that used to emerge out through the five peep-holes of the sense organs are withdrawn to the source of all perceptions temporarily and they emerge out as soon as the individual returns to the waking state.

This period of experience in life when the mind of an individual has withdrawn its contacts from the five organs of knowledge and the five organs of activity, is considered as sleep. In short, sleeping is the condition when the human mind has set for the time being. When it emerges out the individual is pushed into the plane of his waking state experiences.

One who is diligently doing a bit of meditation upon this metaphor can have glimpses of a greater implication and understanding. For example, we the dwellers of the globe may say, 'the sun has set' or 'the sun is gone,' etc., but from the standpoint of the sun, he neither goes nor

sets; only, that part of the world where we live has moved out of the aura of sunlight or, yet may say, the sun has moved off into another realm to illumine the objects in front of it. Similarly, the mind in deep sleep is not experiencing any annihilation or destruction but it has only, for the time being, ducked itself behind a veil of ignorance or self-forgetfulness.

Here, the enumerated list of the absentee activities in the deep sleep state includes all the functions of the instruments of action and all the perceptions of the instruments of knowledge: seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and feeling belong to the 'perception' group of the instruments of knowledge, and to speak, to take, to enjoy, to evacuate and to move are the 'functions of the instruments of action. When both of them are inactive the individual is considered 'asleep'.

प्राणाग्नय एवैस्मिन्पुरे जाग्रति ।
 गार्हपत्यो ह वा एषोऽपाना व्यानोऽ
 न्वाहार्यपचनो यद्गार्हपत्यात्प्रणीयते
 प्रणयनादावहनीयः प्राणः ॥ ३ ॥

Praana-agnaya eva-itasmin-pure jaagrati.
Gaarhapatyo ha vaa esho-apaanah
vyaano / anvaahaarya pachanah
yat gaarhapatyaat praneeyate;
pranayanaada-avahaneeyah praanah.

(3)

The flames of the *Prana* alone are awake (bright) in the city of the body at the time of sleep. The *Apana* is the *Gurhapatya* fire, *Vyana* is *Anvaharya-pachana* fire. The *Prana* is the *Ahavaniya* fire because it is taken out of the *Garhapatya* fire.

The second question of the student was an enquiry on the centres or faculties that are sleeplessly working in the physical structure of an individual who is asleep and, consequently, totally unaware of his body. This *Brahmana* is the answer of Pippalada to this second question of the disciple. The answer is indeed quite direct inasmuch as the rishi states that the vital centres of energy, the *pranas*, alone are awake in the sleeping man. The body is generally considered as the city in the Upanishadic literature because of its similarity to a capital city from which the king reigns over his kingdom. There are the great walls of

the city with gateways (the sense openings fitted to the body walls) with royal guards guarding them, and a chief minister and ministers controlling the entire city-*devas* in the sense organs controlled by the mind and the intellect. The very word *Purusha* is meaning "one who dwells in the *puri* (city)"

After thus proving that the *prana* is wide awake in the body while the individual is asleep, the rishi makes it an occasion to prescribe a method of *upasana* for his disciples. It looks as though the rishi is working upon a piece of wood! A sculptor doing a fine and intricate design would now and then lift his instrument from the material on which he is working to sharpen and polish it to gain a sharper edge and a greater efficiency. Similarly, here also we find that the rishi is punctuating his discourses every now and then to initiate the students into a new and greater method of meditation. We must therefore understand that *Vendanta* cannot be grasped correctly and fully by a mere study, however intense it may be, without an equally dedicated practice.

Here the attempt is to make us understand better the five great *pranas* with a comparison of them to the great ritual of the Vedic period called the *havan*. It must certainly have been a picture which was well known and the significances of which were very clear to the students at the time. But, unfortunately, we, the product of the modern age—an age wherein even with a multiple microscope we cannot easily discover a suspicion of the old culture among our educated classes—must necessarily feel this metaphor as alien to our comprehension and understanding. This should be as difficult for us to understand as it should be for the rishi generation to understand our modern metaphors drawn from the railways, the airways, the tractors or the sten-gun! So, we need not feel any diffidence or have a sense of inferiority complex if we cannot understand some of these technical terminologies: it does not at all declare our stupidity or foolishness; the passage must be difficult; it cannot be otherwise.

However, we shall make an honest effort. *Garhapatya*-fire was a sample of sacred fire maintained by the householders in the ancient days, very carefully tended and preserved, for it was from this that they used to light up and maintain the main fireplace into which they offered their oblations during rituals. It was always maintained in the house and was never allowed to be put out. Since creation of other fires was done with this, and since fire used to go 'out' from the *garhapatya*, it is a perfect simile for the *apana* which functions in ejecting and rejecting things. The

prana is considered as the *ahavaniya*-fire which is lit from the *garhapatya* and separately nurtured and fattened for the throwing in of the oblation. *Prana*, rising as it were from the *apana*, functions in the face and receives oblations of the sense impulses through the sense organs. The *anvaharya-pachana*-fire, otherwise called the *dakshina agni* (southern fire), is a sacred fireplace maintained on the southern side (right side) of the main firealter and this is compared to *vyana* because this cyclonic energy whistling through all parts of the body ultimately leaves its abode through the right side of the heart.

यदुच्छ्वासनिः श्वासावेतावाहुती समं नयतीति
 स समानः । मनो ह वाव यजमान
 इष्टफलमेवोदानः । स एनं यजमान-
 महरहर्ब्रह्म गमयति ॥ ४ ॥

Yad-uchchhvaasa nihsvaasaav-etau
aahuti samam nayateeti/sa samaanah.
Mano ha vaava yajamaana,
ishtaphalameva udaanah.
Sa enam yajamaanam-
aharaha brahma gamayati.

(4)

Because the *Samana* distributes equally the oblations of the 'inspiration and expirations', he is priest (*hotri*). The mind is the sacrificer (*yajaman*) and the *Udana* is the fruit of the sacrifice. He leads the sacrificer every day (in deep sleep) to *Brahman*.

In the last *Brahmana* the three *pranas* were given their corresponding locations in the scheme of the well-known external rituals of the Vedic period. Here, we have an explanation of what the other two *two pranas* stand for in the external ritualistic details.

Since the *Samana* is that which distributes the oblations of oxygen received during respiration to every cell in the body, it is considered as the priest in the inner *agnihotra* ceremony. The householder who has organised this *Yajna*, gathered the necessary materials for the same and appointed the various priests, is the very mind. *Udana*, the ultimate cultural trait left over in the mind, is the fruit of the great sacrifice performed.

'He leads the scarificer to Brahman',— Certainly the fruit of the sacrifice leads the sacrificer to *Brahman*, meaning here only 'a greater

peace and happiness'. This is the truth as regards the rituals, but in the metaphor we have been told already that the mind is the sacrificer and the cultural trait is the *Udana*. And this portion in the scripture adds that the *udana* leads one to sleep, the inner world wherein we experience a tranquility which is homogeneous, the *Brahman*. The istate of sleep is this world of relative peace and joy wherin the gross and subtle bodies are, for the time being, together transcended. Since in the deep-sleep condition we are veiled only by ignorance (by the non-apprehension of Reality), we are nearest to the centre. In this sense we may be considered as nearest to *Brahman* or as in *Brahman*.

It is true that a mental dissatisfaction or a cultural abrasion experienced during the day would upset our sleep. For example, a good man finds it difficult to sleep if he has, during the day, committed some conscious crime because the memory of it is against his cultural trait. But again, we find that a criminal cannot sleep well because he has not successfully perpetrated one of his well-planned and well-thought-out schemes of criminality. Here also we find that he could not sleep because he had to do, during the early night, something contrary to his cultural trait.

Thus, to restate using the word *udana*, we can say that when the flow of the *udana* (cultural trait) is obstructed sleep is not easy, when the *udana* is propitiated sleep is automatic. Therefore, the *udana* is the guide that leads the 'waker' and the 'dreamer' and heralds them into the halls of sleep. Those who give some thought to it would find volumes of significance crammed into this simple-looking statement.

It is always the scriptural style to conceal the maximum meaning, the richest treasure, in the simplest-made and the most innocent-looking containers.

अत्रैष देवः स्वप्ने महिमानमनुभवति ।
यद्दृष्टं दृष्टमनुपश्यति
श्रुतं श्रुतमेवार्थमनुश्रुणोति
देशदिगन्तरैश्च प्रत्यनुभूतं पुनः पुनः
प्रत्यनुभवति । दृष्टं चदृष्टं च श्रुतं चाश्रुतं
चानुभूतं चाननुभूतं च सच्चासच्च
सर्वं पश्यति सर्वः पश्यति ॥ ५ ॥

Atraisha devah svapne mahimaanam-anubhavati.
Yad-drshtam drshtam-anupasyati.
srutam srutam-eva-artham anusrnoti.
desa digantaraishcha praty-anubhootam
punah punah/praty-anubhavati.
Drashtam cha-adrsham cha,
srutam cha-asrutam cha,
anubhootam cha-ananubhootam cha
satcha-asatcha/sarvam pasyati
sarvah pasyati.

(5)

In this state the mind enjoys the dream and its greatness. What has been seen it sees again: what has been heard it hears again: what has been enjoyed in different places and countries it enjoys again. What has been seen and not seen, heard and not heard, experienced and not experienced, real and unreal, he sees all. He being, sees all.

After describing the sleep condition and the various centres of energy that are sleeplessly guarding the sleeper's physical structure, Pippalada is answering here the third question raised by his disciple in which the student enquires, 'What is the Deva who sees the dream?' In trying to explain this question, the master not only gives us the identification of the actual 'dreamer' but also provides us with conclusive data sufficient to serve us as a definition of the dream state.

In the waking state is the experience of the external world of objects as interpreted to us by the 'waker' in us who is completely conscious of the body. As a perfect to the waking state, the dream can be defined as the experience of the mind when it is completely uncounscious of the body but gazes on to recognise the sense *impressions* it had gathered while roaming about in its waking consciousness. In fact, the mind viewing the mind is the dreamer seeing the dream. This is something like a pet dog, fattened with living in luxury, in the drawing-room of its master, looking at its own tail wagging. So too the mind curls upon itself and sees at one end of itself the impression chart that it has etched out for itself during its transactions with sense organs in the outer world.

This idea has been brought out here in the typically precise language of the *Sruti* when it says. 'The mind see again what has been already seen; the mind hears again what has been heard' and 'It enjoys what has been enjoyed in different climes and places'.

This enumeration in itself cannot be a complete definition since there are dreams in which we see things which have never been seen, and even visions most unreliable and unbelievable. The *Sruti* is very

careful to include and incorporate in the possibilities of dream even such things as 'what has not been seen, never heard, never experienced' etc.; even unreal things also can be dreamt by the dreamer during the dream. Having thus given a complete explanation of the dream-experience in an attempt at its definition, the master tries to explain the very nature of the relation between the dreamer and the dreamt in that state of consciousness.

Supposing one is dreaming of a jungle scene where he is experiencing that he is being pursued by a hungry and angry-looking tiger. The dreamer must, naturally, run for his life through the thick jungles—among gigantic trees overladen with clusters of rambling creepers which allow no direct sunlight to penetrate through them—until at last, ducking behind rocks and running around boulders, the dreamer slowly reaches the banks of a river into which he jumps and saves himself.

Now, let us suppose that the dreamer suddenly wakes up at the touch of water. Having awakened from the dream, he must at once realize that the waters of the river, the boulders and the rocks, the trees and the creepers, the jungle and the tiger, its grin and his fear, nay, in short even the very dreamer that was running and the earth on which he was running, the sun whose light was not filtering through the creepers...all, all were nothing but his own mind. His mind, as a tiger, threatened his mind which became the 'dreamer', and the same mind assumed the form of the jungle and river. In fact, the 'waker' realises that 'all was nothing but my mind'. *He being thus the all*, both the dreamer and the dreamt, naturally sees himself as the all, even though while dreaming he believed in the full reality of what he saw.

Even unreal things as a four-tusked elephant, reddish in colour with special giant boots on and, perhaps, with a woollen muffler can visit the dreamer in his dream. Thus there is no law that only things seen in the waking state or things that have a 'reality' in the waking state world alone can appear in our dream; in fact we could see things not conceived so far even by the mind of the Creator! And yet dream is nothing but mental impressions gathered by the individual in his waking state. You may wonder how we can have impressions of the above-described elephant in our mind in the waking state. It is here that we find the subtlety with which the Upanishadic statements included and incorporated even things that are now the latest discoveries in our modern world.

The mind works in man not only with ideas that have been directly suggested to it by the challenges of the sense objects but it often works irresistibly of its own accord, wandering into a labyrinth of its own associated ideas. Thus, an individual, while seeing an elephant, might have wondered, 'why not red!' and at the next moment must have also seen huge fellow booted in special dignity and muffled to comfort. But all these must have happened in a twinkling, in such an infinitely small second, that there was no time then for him to realize it all, for, by then the mischievous mind has wandered into its usual channels. Soon a hundred other preoccupations must have flooded the mind and this picture therefore crowded out.

In the dream it so happens that the mind watches the impressions left on it by subconscious ideas that have been created by the corresponding thoughts which, at their rise, the 'waker' was not fully aware of. Thus by this simple expression, '*Experienced and not experienced, Real and unreal*', the master tries to incorporate into the stock of raw materials out of which dreams are minted, even these impressions left on the mind by the sparks of ideas which flash like lightning in the subconscious.

स यदा तेजसाऽभिभूतो भवति ।
 अत्रैष देवः स्वप्नात् पश्यति
 अथ तदैतस्मिन्शरीरे एतत्सुखं भवति ॥ ६ ॥

*Sa yadaa tejasaabhibhooto bhavati
 atraisha devah svapnaan na pasyati.
 Atha tadaitasmin sareere
 etat sukham bhavati*

(6)

When a mind is overpowered by light, that mind sees no dream. At that time bliss arises in body.

When an individual has retired from his fatiguing preoccupation with the world of the five mighty objects, he comes to the realm of dream where again he is a world of plurality projected by his own mind out of the impressions it has gathered from its waking-state experiences. In dream the physical body is not available to the dreamer's consciousness; but the 'dreamer' is conscious of his dream-body. Thus when the Supreme Reality, the life source, 'functions' from the body and 'expresses' through its organs, It becomes the 'waker personality'

while, when It leaves the physical plane and 'functions' through the mind-and-intellect equipment, It becomes the 'dreamer personality'. When even the mind is dropped, within us rises the blissful state in which the 'sleeper' is the lord and master.

The merging of the mind is beautifully described here as '*when a mind is overpowered by light*'. Consciousness illuminates for us the things of the world and the mind, and we thus become aware of them. That in which we become aware of a thing is generally termed by us as light. In this sense, consciousness can be considered as light or effulgence. Now, when the mind is withdrawing itself from its 'dreams', it comes nearer to the source of all light and thus, as it were, gets blinded by the transcendental intensity of the Infinite light; then, for the time being, it can experience only drakeness or *avidya*. Mind blinded by the *Atman*'s effulgence is thus the 'sleeper'.

At the time of sleep, the mind being nearest to the *Atman*, there is the experience of a *negative* bliss, and hence we call this sheath in which the sleeper remained as the Bliss-sheath.* We say that it is a *negative* bliss because of the absence of any mental and intellectual commotions or physical suggestions of pains and limitations. Where the mind has set, all thought waves (*vrittis*) are set and as such the agitations caused here by them are no more there in deep sleep. The absence of agitations is the cause of the *negative* bliss.

One carrying a big load up the hill gets weary and tired, panting and exhausted and then he himself unloads his burden on the wayside resting-beam. At that moment the poor carrier feels a great relief and joy which can be termed as a *negative* happiness in the sense that he has not gained anything new: the sorrow due to the heavy load is no more with him and hence his happiness. Similarly here, in the deep sleep state also, the sorrows caused by mental agitations are no more and hence, comparatively, we term *sleep* as a state of bliss.

When we are neither seeing the dream nor are awake and consequentially, are having no disturbances from outside, we experience the inflow of a limitless and homogeneous *negative* bliss and that state is called the state of deep sleep.

* Refer Swamiji's Discourses on *Isavasyopanishad*, Introductory talks: 'Personality in Man'.

स यथा सोम्य वयासि वासोवृक्षं संप्रतिष्ठन्ते ।
 एवं ह वै तत्सर्वं पर आत्मनि संप्रतिष्ठते ॥ ७ ॥

*Sa yathaa Somya, vayaamsi
 vaaso vriksham sampratishthante;
 evam ha vai tat sarvam
 para atmani sampratishthate.*

(7)

Just as, O Beloved, birds retire to a tree roost, so indeed do all these rest in the supreme Atman.

Here is yet another beautiful analogy that is compelling the master to stop to revel in, of course not without profit to both the teacher and the student. The *indriyas* merge into the mind and the mind that is withdrawn from all its activities retries to rest for a fixed time to revive to greater efficiency, the individual is said to be asleep. The next morning he comes back to the waking condition when the mind as it were, flutters out of its nest to roam about, once again the worm-ridden gutters of the sense objects, seeking therein a consummation and satisfaction.

The statement that this folding up of the mind and its temporary repose is like the flying of the birds back to their nests at the end of the day to rest is not only beautiful but is at once highly artistic in finish and extremely telling in effect. The birds too retire only temporarily when they are fatigued and after their rest, come back again with a hundred times more energy and cheerfulness to the fields of their usual activities. Similarly, here also the fluttering and restless birds in us retire to rest into the Supreme Self, into the 'bliss of Brahman', into the *Ananda-maya kosa*. They too, like the birds, come out of the nest at dawn to roam about, pecking here and there for their food.

All the factors that retire in sleep, as the birds that rest in their nests, until dawn when they can emerge out with greater energy, are enumerated in the following stanza which gives us in its totality a complete picture of what happens to our physical, mental and intellectual personalities in sleep.

पृथिवी च पृथिवीमात्रा चापश्चापोमात्रा च
 तेजश्च तेजोमात्रा च वायुश्च वायूमात्रा
 चाकाशश्चाकाशमात्रा च चक्षुश्च

द्रष्टव्यं च श्रोत्रं च श्रोतव्यं च घ्राणं च
घ्रातव्यं च रसश्च रसयितव्यं च
त्वक् स्पर्शयितव्यं च वाक् वक्तव्यं च
हस्तौ चादातव्यं चोपस्थश्चानन्दयितव्यं च
पायुश्च विसर्जयितव्यं च पादौ च
गन्तव्यं च मनश्च मन्तव्यं च बुद्धिश्च
बोद्धव्यं चाहंकारश्चाहंकर्तव्यं च चित्तं च
चेतयितव्यं च तेजश्च विद्योतयितव्यं च
प्राणश्च विधारयितव्यं च ॥ ८ ॥

*Prithivee cha prithivee maatraa cha apascha-apomaatraa cha
tejascha tejo maatra cha vaayuscha vaayu maatraa cha
aakaasa-schaakaasa maatraa cha chakshuscha
drashtavyam cha*

*srotram cha srotavyam cha ghraanam cha ghraatavyam cha
rasam cha rasayitavyam cha tvak cha sparsayitavyam cha
vaak cha vaktavyam cha hastau chaadaatavyam cha
upasthascha aanandayitavyam cha paayusch
visarjayitavyam cha*

*paadau cha gantavyam cha manascha mantavyam cha
buddhischa boddhavyam cha ahankaarascha-
ahamkartavyam cha*

*chittam cha chetayitavyam cha tejascha vidyotayitavyam cha
praanascha vidhaarayitavyam cha. (8)*

The Earth and its subtle elements, the Water and its subtle elements, the *Akasa* and its subtle elements, the eye and what can be seen, the ear and what can be heard, the nose and what can be smelt, taste and its objects, the hands and what can be grasped, the feet and what can be walked on, the organs of generation and what is to be enjoyed, the organs of excretion and what must be excreted, the mind and what must be thought of, the intellect and what must be determined, the egoism and its objects; *chitta* and its objects, the light and its objects, the *Prana* and everything supported by it — all these rest in the state of sleep like birds in their nest.

This enumeration of the functions in us that become inactive in the deep sleep condition, though it looks too long, falls under a simple classification. The five great elements and their subtle elements (*tanmatras*) representing their fundamental qualities, have their corresponding points in our sense organs. Thus, earth and the nose that

smells, water and the tongue that tastes, fire and the eyes that perceive shapes, air and the skin that feels touch, *akasa* and the ear that hears sound—these together constitute the macrocosmic and the microcosmic sense organs of knowledge. Since sounds are the property of space (*akasa*), whatever may be the sound that we hear and wherever it may be heard, they are all modification of *akasa*. Similarly, all shapes that we can recognise by the eye are but the different variations of the fundamental shape—the shape of fire; so too in all other cases. Thus we are told that the *indriyas* with their objects completely retire in sleep.

Not only the sense organs of knowledge but even all the organs of action are put out in sleep. The organs of action are five in number—the organ of speech, hands, legs, the instrument of procreation and the equipment for excretion—and each of them individually has its own function: to speak, to lift, to walk, to procreate (to enjoy), and to excrete. Here the *Brahmana* describes that all the instruments of action with their activities retire in deep sleep.

Apart from the organs of action and knowledge, even the inner instruments of perception, feeling and comprehension do retire in sleep. Thus the inner instruments—the mind, the intellect, the *chit* and the ego—with their independent and individual functions as thinking, determining, illuminating and self-ascertaining retire in sleep.

The last section of this *Brahmana* says that '*the prana and what is to be supported by it*' also retire. Here there is no contradiction with what the master has said earlier: that the activities of the *prana* are the sleepless guardian angles that sustain and maintain the body unit intact when the individual is at sleep. Here by *prana* is meant only that particular branch of activity of the *prana* by virtue of which the sense organs of perception were functioning in the waking state. The officer in charge of the sense organs was termed as the *prana*, and the *prana* is at rest in the sleeping man.

The sum total of what we have been discussing in this *Brahmana* enumerates all the factors that together constitute the *ahankar* or the ego-centre in all its fields of activity. This factor, indentifying with the above mentioned different entities constituting a man, becomes the ego-centre who arrogates to himself the feelings that I am the sufferer or the enjoyer in life. This idea is clearly brought out in the following *Brahmana*.

एष हि द्रष्टा स्प्रष्टा श्रोता घ्राता रसयिता मन्ता बोद्धा कर्ता
 विज्ञानात्मा पुरुषः । स परेऽक्षरे आत्मनि संप्रतिष्ठते ॥ ९ ॥

*Esha hi drashtaa sprashtaa srotaa ghraataa rasayitaa
 mantaa boddhaa kartaa / vijnaanaatmaa purushah.*

Sa pare-akshare aatmani sampratishthate.

(9)

That is who sees, feels, hears, smells, tastes, thinks, knows. He is the doer, the intelligent ego, the *Purusha*. He dwells in the highest indestructible Self.

The active agent in life's turmoils, who feels the victories and successes and the carping sorrows of all failures, who dances to the tunes sung by circumstances, whether cheerful or melancholy, who flutters here and there as the wind chances to blow in the stormy field of opposing likes and dislikes and who swings between the two banks of joy and sorrow, is this ego-centre that helplessly floats along like a pathetic dazed body, bloated up and getting putrefied in the waters of time and circumstances.

This ego-centre, a product of our identification with our body, mind and intellect, is the one who has the delusory arrogance to claim that he is the actor, the perceiver, the enjoyer and the knower. In short, the intelligent 'knowing soul' (*Vijnana atma*) know its own delusory extensions of something different from itself and due to this wrong perception comes to reap its own poisonous harvest of sorrows, limitations, finitude and mortality.

To summarise, Pippalada has been hammering in so long his exposition of sleep to give an idea that the ego-centre in us gets drowned in a mist of 'ignorance' and the consequent 'unknown bliss' is the experience of sleep. The various factors that go into the composition of this shadow nothingness together constitute the ego as already enumerated.

Now, in this *Brahmana*, the rishi is indicating that the sum total of the above enumerated factors, together constituting the ego which retires under the blanket of ignorance in the deep sleep state, is exactly the villain that sabotages our life's real perfection and divinity with its own foolish arrogation and self-imposed conceit that it is the actor and the enjoyer—the 'knowing Self' (*Vijnana Atman*).

This delusory ego has no vitality of its own as it is but a mere

superimposition upon the *Atman*, 'the highest, indestructible Self.' The pure conscious centre, that is, the spark of life in man, is a veritable dynamo that lends its energy to the ego to dance to its own death tunes. Just as ghost has no existence apart from the post, so too ego-centre has no existence other than the Supreme Self in us. The vision of the post and the ghost can never co-exist at one and the same time; so too, a glimpse of the Self will make the egocentric bundle of false values, wrong notions, distorted perceptions and sad errors disappear at one stroke as readily as at the touch of the awakened intellect the dream world rolls off.

If there is such a Self in us, apart from what we generally know as the ego-centre, certainly the teacher should give us some more details about this Self. Perhaps the students sitting in front of Pippalada expressed in their attitude a great surprise and a burning anxiety when they heard the master's declaration of a greater entity in them serving as the very substratum for the only greater entity in them serving as the very substratum for the only entity known to them to be themselves, namely their own ego-centre. Thus in the next *Brahmana* we have a beautiful description which is comparable easily with the best available in all the scriptural literature of the world, and which defines in the language of the finite the eternal Truth principle.

परमेवाक्षरं प्रतिपद्यते स यो ह वै
 तदच्छायमशरीरमलोहितं शुभ्रमक्षरं वेदयते ।
 यस्तु सोम्य स सर्वज्ञः सर्वो भवति ।
 तदेष श्लोकः ॥ १० ॥

*Param-eva-aksharam pratipadyate sa yo ha vai
 tad-achchhaayam-asareeram-alohitam
 subhramaksharam Vadayate.
 Yastu somya, sa sarvajnah sarvo bhavati;
 todesha slokah*

One who, O Beloved knows this Being which is without shadow, without body, without colour, which is pure and indestructible, becomes omniscient and becomes all: the Supreme, Indestructible Being he surely attain. For this, there is a *mantra*.

Having described in the above *Brahmans* the various faculties that really retire in the sleep condition, and also having pointed out the egocentric one in us who identifies with these sleeping factors in us the

master now, in this *Brahmana*, is describing the Reality behind the delusion-created ego. The ego is established in Pure Awareness, and all the other faculties—the body, the mind and the intellect—are all mere superimpositions upon the Truth as blueness or murkiness, redness or whiteness is upon the colourless sky.

The ego-centre which has realised its error comes to experience itself to be nothing other than the Pure Consciousness, the Reality. This rediscovery of the Truth is the goal of existence, the mission of human life. Having attained it, there is no reason why we should feel even for a moment, the limitations which are the fumes of ignorance in us and the revings of the rabid ego.

If there is, as explained, a Reality, the Self behind the ego other than the ego itself—in fact, something having exactly the opposite qualities of a the ego—what could be that Infinite Reality, was the question that was posed by the look of confusion on the face of the student.

We have already noted that the Infinite cannot be described in words because language can express only the finite things of the world and our experience with them.

The achievement of the rishi here is not so much in directly explaining the Supreme but in suggestively indicating the great Truth with vehemence and clarity. These expressions are given out neither in the language of the head nor in the language of the heart: the *Sruti* is written in the language of the intellect-emotion.

'Which is without shadow'—Here the word shadow has been used in its ampler meaning as discussed earlier and it includes all reflections. Wherever there is a reflecting medium, in all those place we see the sun reflected. Not only in the Ganges but also in the wayside muddy pools the sun is reflected. Seeing these pluralistic reflections; if we were to enquire into the cause of these reflections, we will certainly understand that it is the sun, which is separate from all its reflections. In this chapter the rishi is explaining to us the waker, the dreamer and the deep sleeper which are the assumptions of personalities by the same ego-centre functioning in different equipments as the gross body, the subtle body and the causal body. Here the master is trying to point out the Reality whose reflection is the ego-centre. Therefore, just as we understand the sun as something separate from its own reflections, so too here the Truth is described as 'without shadow'. Transcending the ego we experience the Reality. Sublimation of the ego is the process by

which the awareness is us becomes aware of itself; which is called the experience of the Reality.

'*Without body*' - In denying thus a body to the Supreme, in fact they deny all forms to the Supreme. Form is the signboard of matter which is finite and perishable. Only when a thing is conditioned by something other than itself it can have a form. A sample of water, a few yards away from the land and a yard below the surface, has not got any particular form since it is all water surrounded by water only, and therefore that sample of water is not conditioned by anything other than itself.

But in the case of table or a pot it has got a definite form, for all round the table or the pot there is something other than the table or the pot conditioning it. Thus you and I have got a form because of the material of space surrounding us. In denying thus a form to the Supreme Reality, the *Sruti* by implication, says that it is homogeneous and all pervading. In fact such an all pervading factor, the One-without-a-second, ever unconditioned, alone can be the Truth Supreme which is eternal and Infinite.

In saying '*without body*' we need not understand it as without the physical form only. In an individual the matter envelopments around him can fall into three groups as the gross, the subtle, and the causal bodies. None of these in the Supreme because it is '*without body*'. Thus by this epithet it is indicated that the Supreme Reality is that state of experience when we have transcended all the three bodies during our meditation.

'*Without colour*'—By denying body to the Supreme it is also indicated that the spirit is without desire; for we know that the body has been taken up by the ego concept as its instrument for fulfilling its own desires, and because there is no form or body, the Supreme must necessarily be without any 'colour'; for, qualities like colour can only through a substance having form.

'*Which is pure and indestructible*'—If there is a factor which has no body and so no qualities, it is certainly *pure* because there is no chance of defile the Supreme, there is nothing in the Supreme that can be touched by impurity. On the whole, from the above negations, it has become clear that the eternal factor, the Self, is without any attribute and hence it is indestructible; for, all things destructible are noticed to have some attribute or other, manifest or unmanifest, and

hence the *Sruti* asserts that 'it is indestructible'.

Having realised the Supreme Being, this ego-centre can no longer exhibit in itself the ordinary weaknesses of immorality or imperfection. It *becomes omniscient*, says the *Sastra*. Omniscience means all-knowing. If the *Sastra* were to be understood literally the one who realizes the Self will be able to know at one and the same time all the thoughts entertained by all people at all places, not only in the present and in the past, but those belonging to the future too! Alas! this would indeed be a tragedy for the Realised.

Those of us who are aware of the organised tyranny of thoughts even in our individual life cannot but sympathise with that poor wretch who, at the time of his Self-realisation, would come to experience all the tyrannies all people suffered in their minds in all climes and at all periods of time! If this be true, unenviable indeed is the status of a *jnani* who has to suffer this mental torture in order to fulfil his omniscience. If this literal meaning be true, then Self-realisation would not be a redemption but, on the other hand, it would be the destiny, to be lived through carping sorrows and unending agitations. Naturally, there is something wrong in our very understanding of the term *omniscient*.

In our day-to-day contacts with the world we gain knowledge but this is knowledge of things. It is conditioned knowledge: knowledge conditioned by objects. In this process of knowing there is the awarer, the awareness and the object of the awareness. But in transcending the mind and intellect the ego comes to experience its essential nature as Pure Awareness and as such it is not 'an awareness of Awareness' but becomes Awareness itself. The Awareness or Consciousness in an individual which is the Self in him is the all-pervading Reality; as such the Awareness in every being is one and the same.

Since without Awareness 'knowledge of things' is not possible, we can say that Awareness is omniscient, in the sense that every 'knowledge known' anywhere, at any time, by any one, is always in the presence of this Pure Awareness, and as such Awareness is omniscient. It being the Self of all, the knower of the Self, experiencing Selfhood, becomes all. Here the rishi quotes a Vedic *mantra* in support of his above statement.

विज्ञानात्मा सह देवैश्च सर्वैः
प्राणो भूतानि संप्रतिष्ठति यत्र ।

तदक्षरं वेदयते यस्तु साम्य स सर्वज्ञः
सर्वमेवाविवेशेति ॥ ११ ॥

*Vijnaanaatmaa saha devaischa sarvaih,
praano bhootaani sampratishthati yatra,
Tadaksharam Vedayate yastu somya,
sa sarvajnah, sarvameva-avivesa iti.*

O Beloved One, he who knows the imperishable. *Atman* in whom rests the 'Knowing self (*ego*) with all the *Devas*, the *Pranas* and the five elements, becomes omniscient and, indeed, enters (all) to become all.

In this stanza the entire contents of the chapter have been beautifully concluded. By quoting the Vedic *mantra*, Pippalada is citing his authority for all his assertions and statements in this chapter.

'Enters to become all'—The one who realizes that he is not a mortal limited ego-centre but in his essential nature is the Self or the *Atman*, realizes that he is the one unbroken life in all beings and comes to experience this sacred unity that is underlying the seeming diversity in the pluralistic world perceived by the mind-and-intellect equipments.

HERE ENDS THE FOURTH PRASNA

QUERY V

SATYAKAMA AND PIPPALADA

The previous question and answer were meant for students of the highest perfection and the greatest mental and intellectual integration. But ordinary students will not be able to understand the whole Truth and come to experience it directly when they hear about it in so few words, pregnant with their endless suggestions and voluminous import. Those who could not realize the indicated Truth during the last conversation are necessarily dull in their subtle sheaths and so the only method by which we can make them comprehend easily the great Truth is by giving them a spiritual treatment. The course of treatment suggested for all such patients suffering from dullness of comprehension, lack of concentration and dimness of mental vision is called technically the *upasana*. Here we have the meditation upon OM and OM-*upasana* advised as a specific to cure the malady.

Constant and diligent meditation on OM itself has a potency to raise us in our evolutionary scale to the very pinnacle of perfection, not perhaps in a non-stop flight, but in progressive stages. This is called gradual liberation (*Krama mukti*). In this chapter we will have a description of how to meditate upon OM and the description guides us to an understanding of the relative values gained when with different emphasis we chant or meditate on OM.

अथ हैनं शैब्यः सत्यकामः पप्रच्छ ।
स यो ह वै तदभगवन्मनुष्येषु
प्राणान्तर्मोकारमाभिधायति ॥
कतमं वाव स तेन लोकं जयतीति ॥१॥

*Atha hainam Saibyah Satyakaamah papraccha,
 'So yo ha vai tadbhagavan, manushyeshu
 prayaanaatam-Omkaaram abhidhyaayeeta
 katamam vaava sa tena lokam jayati, iti*

(1)

Then Satyakama, son of Sibi, questioned him, 'O Bhagavan, to what world does he go who, among men, meditates on OM until his death?

With this *Brahmana* we are taking up a theme in *Prasnopanishad* which explains the Vedic *mantra* OM and the meditation upon it. As we have said earlier, the Upanishadic seers are never tired of insisting upon one method or another of worship or meditation which alone can integrate the personality and make it single-pointed. Without this preparation of the mind and intellect, an average man's comprehension or perception cannot appreciate the unity that is underlying the diversity.

Thus Satyakama, one of the six disciples, approaches the guru and asks a question: what will be the destiny of one who has been meditation and contemplating upon the significances of OM 'until death'? In all *upasana* it is necessary that the *upasaka* continues to practise till the moment of breathing his last.

As contrasted with this method, a Vedantic man of realisation is free to die in all circumstances and conditions. His liberation is not in any way influenced by either the place of his death or the time of his departure—a man of realisation comes to experience the Truth constantly and continuously in all conditions and at all times even in his life here!

In all these things the rule is the same: 'As you think so you becomes'! When at the departing time our thoughts wander into the sensuous or the passionate, in order to fulfil these parting desires the subtle body will have to make a pilgrimage and reappear again in a form fit to earn the experience demanded, under a favourable scheme or circumstances. The resultant of the total thought-life is the last thought which, in its turn, determines the next scheme of experience to be undergone—which is indicated here in the question, 'To what world does he go?'

तस्मै स होवाच ।

एतद्वै सत्यकाम परं चापरं च ब्रह्म यदोकारः ।

तस्माद्द्विद्वानेतेनैवायतनेनैकतरमन्वेति ॥ २ ॥

*Tasmai sa hovaacha, / 'Etadvai Satyakaama,
param cha aparam cha brahma
yad-Omkaarah / tasmaad vidvaan
etena-eva-ayatanenaikataram-anveti'.*

(2)

He replied, 'Satyakama, the syllable OM is indeed the symbol of both the lower and the higher *Brahman*; the conditioned and the unconditioned, the finite and the Infinite. Therefore, he who knows it by this means surely attains either of them'.

We have already discussed the meaning of OM when we found that the waking, the dream, and the deep sleep worlds are indicated by the A-sound, the U-sound and M-sound respectively in the syllable OM, which together constitute the finite world of plurality experienced by each of us in his mortal existence.* We also found then that OM has got an *amarta portion* (a *mantra*-less portion) as represented by the pregnant silence between two successive OMs. Those who are meditating upon it would be thereby meditating upon the fourth plane of consciousness called the *turiya* or Self, which is Infinite and Eternal. Thus, OM is a symbol which has in it not only the super-imposition of the finite world, but also a representation of the Infinite.

Therefore the Brahmana says that the result of the OM meditation would depend upon the the of *bhavana* the devotee maintains while meditating upon OM. The principle being 'as you think so you become', if an individual is meditating more upon the significances of A, U, M, letters then he will be attaining the finite world only; but, on the other hand, if any individual is meditating upon OM as the Supreme Eternal Factor he would be thereby inviting a result by which he gains the very Supreme. The meditation on OM in the finite level will be described in the following three *Brahmanas*.

स यद्येकमात्रमभिध्यायीत स तेनैव
संवेदितस्तूर्णमिव जगत्यामभिसंपद्यते ।
तमृचो मनुष्यलोकमुपनयन्ते स तत्र तपसा
ब्रह्मचर्येण श्रद्धया संपन्नो महिमानमनुभवति ॥ ३ ॥

* Refresh your memory by reading either *Mandukya and Karika* or *Meditation and Life*.

Sa yady-ekamaatram-adhidhyaayeeta
satenaiva / samvedia-stoornameva
jagatyaam-abhisampadyate.
Tamrcho manushya-lokam-upanayante
sa tatra tapasaa / brahmacharyena sraddhayaa
sampanno mahimaanam-anubhavati

(3)

If he meditates on one *mantra* (measure) of it (A), then he, being enlightened by that, comes quickly to earth again. The *Rik Devata* leads him into the world of men immediately, and being endowed with austerity, celibacy and faith, there he easily attains greatness.

From this *Brahmana* onwards we have discussions exposing the finite nature of the results accrued by meditating upon the grosser or lower aspects of the OM syllable. By concentraing upon the A-sound which comprehends the waking state experiences, the individuals, after death, comes back quickly to the world of mortals with a greater inclination for spirituality and a greater subtlety of mind and intellect which can easily comprehend the Truth of Vedanta and, through diligent practice, come to experience the glory of Selfhood.

Here is the *Brahmana* wherein the master clearly points out that no *upasana* is possible or spiritual perfection practicable without austerity, celibacy and faith. Certainly, in these days over-indulgence, sensuousness and lack of faith, these conditions would read as almost a list of impossible terms for a human personality to follow. In fact, if we understand the import of these three terms in their correct proportions we shall find a complete and satisfactory intellectual appeal to accept and justify the scriptural insistence upon these three conditions.

Austerity does not merely mean unnecessary self-denial or forced self-restraint, but it insists upon a constant output of intelligent effort in curbing the flesh from all its ruinous tendencies to suicidal excesses.

Again, the idea of *celibacy*. Celibacy as indicated by the term *brahmacharya* means more than the control of the sex act in the man-and-wife relationship: it includes in its point of view a mental control at the very source of all gross and dissipating thought eruptions.

The third and most important factor contributing to the richness of a seeker is *faith*. It is possible in these days that your upper lips roll up to reach nearer to the tip of your nose when you hear the word faith! A true student of Vedanta should congratulate you for thus feeling inimical to

the idea of 'faith' as it is understood today not only in Hinduism but in almost all other similar religions that have come to be victimised by an unhealthy pack of priests.

'Faith'. in its spiritual context, does not mean an intellectual surrender or an unquestioned sentimental and emotional tribute at the altar of a symbol or idea which the innocent devotees do not understand. Faith here means that psychological and intellectual understanding and balance without which not even our common day-to-day business of life could, in fact, be efficiently transacted. Faith in ourselves and in our own capacities is the nucleus of all achievements and without this initial capital none of us can build up either a career or a pattern of existence.

The modern psychologist would say that he who has totally lost all faith in himself is the one who is raving mad in the streets. To the degree an individual has lost faith in himself he is impotent in life and ineffectual in the competitive world. Such an one wither turns hysterical in constitution or lunatic in disposition.

Even in the market place, if we have got some ability, we can trade upon it only when we have some faith in it. Thus, if I am a typist who has been certified to type correctly at a speed of 60 words per minute, unless I have a complete confidence in my own abilities I will never be able to get into any situation in life where I can strike a profitable bargain with my ability. If a man who has lost all his faith in himself and who, as a result, fears that he will topple over even a small stone on the road, goes round every stone carefully, avoiding all imagined dire possibilities, others on the roadside would murmur, 'Poor man, he has gone off his rocker!'

It is this essential factor in individuals which makes it possible for them to encash readily their faculties, that is called faith. Certainly, in this sense of the term, we must have faith in the spiritual science, in our instructor and above all, a faith in ourselves, that we will be able to live the great and noble values of life insisted upon by the science of spiritualism, if we are to achieve success in it.

In any practice of spiritualism, be it through the path of love, or the path of action, or the path of mysticism, or along the path of knowledge, success certainly depends upon the amount of *austerity*, *celibacy* and *faith* one brings into it all through one's spiritual career. Here the *Sastrra* insists upon all the three and says that *upasana* of OM should be undertaken only by people who are living values in order that it may yield its promised fruits.

अथ यदि द्विमात्रेण मनसि संपद्यते
 सोऽन्तरिक्षं यजुर्भिरुन्नीयते सोमलोकम् ।
 स सोमलोके विभूतिमनुभूय पुनरावर्तते ॥ ४ ॥

*Atha yadi dvimaatrena manasi sampadyate
 sa antariksham yajurbhir-unneeeyate
 somalokam. / Sa somaloke
 vibhootim-anubhooya punaraavartate.*

(4)

If he meditates on its second *matra* only, becomes one with the Moon. He is led up by the *Mantra Devata* of the *Yajur Veda* to the world of the Moon. Having enjoyed greatness there, he is guided back again.

Just as the previous *Brahmana* where the discussion was upon the fruits accrued by meditating upon the 'A' sound in OM, here in this *Brahmana* the fruits or the worlds gained by one who is meditating upon the middle *matra* of the OM syllable is discussed. The rishi says that its presiding deity, the *Yajur-mantra devata*, will guide the meditator into the world of the moon—the world of the manes—and after enjoying there for some length of time he will be guided back to don his mortal coil again.

यः पुनरेतं त्रिमात्रेणोमित्येतेनैवाक्षरेण परं
 पुरुषमभिध्यायित स तेजसि सूर्ये संपन्नः ।
 यथा पादोदरस्त्वच्चा विनिर्मुच्यते । एवं
 हवै स पाप्मना विनिर्मुक्तः स सामभिरुन्नीयते
 ब्रह्मलोकं स एतस्माज्जीवघनात्परात्परं
 पुरिशयं पुरुषमीक्षते । तदेतौ श्लोको भवतः ॥ ५ ॥

*Yah punaretam trimaatrena
 Om-ityetenaivaaksharena
 param / purusham-abhidhyaayeeta,
 sa tejasi soorye sampannah.
 Yathaa paadodara-stvachaa vinirmuchyate.
 Evam/ha vai sa paapmanaa vinirmuktah
 Sa saamaabhir-unneeeyate/brahmalokam
 sa etatmaa-jjeevaghanaat paraatparam
 purisayam purusham-eekshate.
 Tad etau slokau bhavatach.*

(5)

But if again he meditates on his highest *Purusha* with this syllable by all its three *matras*, becomes united with the bright Sun. As a snake is freed from its skin, so is he freed from all sins. He is led by the *Sama hymns* to the world of Brahma, the Creator, and from Him—the mass of life—he beholds the Supreme *Purusha* residing in the heart. There are the two following verses about it.

Here the seer is giving us an idea of what would be the destiny of those who have been meditating all their lifetime upon OM as a synthetic whole constituted of the sounds A, U and M. We are told that, led by the deities of *Sama hymns*, the ego-centre of such a great devotee passes through the Sun, the eternal source of energy, and goes beyond to the world of the *Hiranyagarbha* or the Total Mind. From there, unlike those who meditate upon 'A' and 'U' exclusively, he never comes back, but having gained illumination through the realisation of the Conscious Principle in himself, he gets merged into the Total Reality. This what we call progressive liberation (*Kramamukti*) which we have explained in the introduction to this chapter.

This set of three stanzas gives us a vivid picture of the finite nature of the achievements accrued by meditating upon the parts of OM: it cannot be otherwise since out of the finite things finitude alone can be milked. The purpose of these three stanzas becomes amply clear when we watch the Vedic *mantra* that has been quoted by the rishi here. This being a *Brahmana Upanishad* we have already seen how the rishi is compelled to quote the corresponding Vedic *mantra* for every direct statement or emphatic assertion that he makes in the *Brahmana*. Therefore the rishi concludes his statement saying, 'There are the two following verses about it.'

तिस्त्रौ मात्रा मृत्युमत्यः प्रयुक्ता
 अन्योन्य सक्ता अनविप्रयुक्तः ।
 क्रियासु बाह्याभ्यन्तरमध्यमासु
 सम्यक्प्रयुक्तासु न कम्पते ज्ञः ॥ ६ ॥

*Tistro maatraa mrityumatyaha prayuktta
 anyonnya-saktaa anaviprayuktah.
 Kriyaasu baahya-abhyantara-madhyamaasu
 samyak-prayuktaasu na kampate jnah*

(6)

The three *matras*, when employed separately, are mortal-finite, but when they are strung together they are not in any sense of the term 'wrongly employed'. But when they

are 'properly employed' in all their internal, external and midway functions, the knower thereafter trembles not.

In this Vedic *mantra* there is a clear note of warning by which the rishi explains the relative merits of chanting the OM and meditating upon its first three *matras* individually. When individually and separately meditated upon, the meditator will naturally be concentrating upon the waking, the dreaming and the deep sleep *egocentric* personalities in him and naturally, the fruits thereof can only be finite and mortal.

But on the other hand, when the three *matras* of A, U and M are strung together and rhythmically chanted with the appropriate meditations upon their individual significances, the Veda declares, 'When they are strung together they are not in any sense of the term "wrongly employed"'. When we do an act it can fall under three categories: either really good, or not bad, or positively bad. Between positive goodness and positive evil there is a dusky area of 'not evil'; 'not evil' is not 'positive goodness' at any time.

In OM meditation, to concentrate upon the various syllables separately is positively mortal, finite and so not advisable. But when they are strung together they are '*not wrongly employed*'. As seekers of self-perfection all that we should understand out of it is that to chant OM with the three *matras* together is better than putting overemphasis upon any particular *matra* in OM.

'When they are properly employed'— Here the Vedic seer, by a contrast with the earlier expression '*not wrongly employed*', is positively giving us a hint as to what he meant. He says, 'when *rightly employed* the results would be greater and this 'right includes and incorporates a perfect alignment with the *external and middle functions*'. These terms would look rather unintelligent to us who can no more appreciate the symbolic language of the ancient seers. It is sometimes described by some textbooks as the three types of chanting that are possible in *mantra japa*. They are the loud pronunciation (*tara*), the muttering (*madhyama*) and the purely mental repetition (*mantra*), But this does not seem to fit well in the context though we may accept it as additional knowledge useful to a spiritual aspirant in his practice.

External should necessarily mean consciousness of the external world of sense objects available to us in the waking state, *internal* should mean the simple consciousness illuminating the causal sheath in our deep sleep, and the *middle* arena would be when we are under the arch

of the subtle body, enjoying our dream state of existence.

To superimpose these ideas—waking on A, dream on U and deep sleep on M—and to chant the OM in one continuous easy flow is the method of *properly employing* the great meditation-support (*aalambanam*) in the path of knowledge. One who does OM-*upasana* properly with sincerity, regularity and consistent effort, and who is well-established in austerity, celibacy and truthfulness, comes to merge himself in the silence between the two successive OM's (*amatra*), and experience the all-pervading Self, the life factor, in himself.

He who recognises himself to be this vital factor, which in its essential nature of knowledge illuminates the waking, dream and sleep but all the same is ever untouched by any of the happenings in any one of these planes of existence, has understood the unity that underlies the diversity, the rhythm that lies muffled in the seeming discords in life. To be in the awareness of the Infinite Reality into which all plurality dissolves is to transcend all possibilities of agitation.

The child in his ignorance weeps because it has not received the yellow bird which his brother has got; if only the child comes to know that the bird in the brother's hand and the camel in his own hand are all made up of sugar candy he will realise that whether it is the hump of the camel or the tail of the bird it is all sweetness alone! With this knowledge the child's agitations and delusory sorrows will certainly end.

To arrive at and to see the sweet concord in the hawker's basket the child will have to grow up to a realization which the grown-up man possesses. Similarly, the pluralistic world confuses and confounds us and we, ignoring the Ultimate Reality, try to maintain in ourselves equipoise and balance while playing with the ever-changing waves of the objectified world. He who has realized this changeless eternal factor, the illuminator of all experiences, that *vidvan (jnani)*— '*trembles not*'.

The world used is specially beautiful because of the wealth of its significance. *Na kampate* is a very suggestive phrase in Sanskrit which includes in its meaning not only trembling because of fear, but all tremors of sentimental emotions: of love and hatred, of success and failure, of honour and dishonour, etc. In short, all agitations, physical, mental and intellectual, are comprehended by this beautiful word. One, having realized the Self, cannot react to the world outside as he did

before because his inner world is permanently tranquil and peaceful.

ऋग्भरेतं यजुर्भिरन्तरिक्षं स सामभिर्यत्तत्कवयो
वेदयन्ते । तमोकारेणैवायतनेनान्वेति
विद्वान्यत्तच्छन्तमजरममृतमभयं परं चेति ॥ ७ ॥

Rgbhir-etam yajurbhir-antariksham

sa saamabhir-yattal—kavayo / vedayante.

Tam-Omkaarenenaiva—ayatanena-anveti / vid' vaan:

vattachchantam-ajaram-amritam-abhayam param cheti.

(7)

Through the *Rik-mantra Devata* he reaches this world, led by *Yajur-mantra Devata* he reaches the World of the Manes, and guided by the *Sama* verses he reaches *Brahmalaka*. By means of the syllable OM the wise one reaches also that which is Quiet, Undecaying, Deathless, Fearless and Supreme.

To read this translation without an understanding of what has been explained in this chapter is to understand how and why modern educated Hindus run away from the study of the Veda. The Vedic *mantras* are so brief that they are to be accompanied by voluminous discourses to bring them within the comprehension of the modern man. Just as we cannot follow it now, even in the past also the rishis felt that many of the Vedic *mantras* needed a correct exposition. It is to explain these *mantras* in a more elaborate fashion that we have a substantial literature in the *Brahmanas*. This *Mantras* clearly shows that the whole chapter was but an exhaustive treatise upon the last two *mantras* quoted here in the form of the Vedic hymns.

We have already seen how those who are meditating upon the A sound of syllable OM, guided by the *amatra* deity, the *Rik-mantra devata*, come back quickly to reach the world and live in a better atmosphere of spirituality so that from childhood onwards they get favourable circumstances to live, exert and grow to be dynamic men of knowledge and poise.

Those who are meditating upon the U-sound of the syllable OM, guided by its deity, the *Yajur-mantra devata*, go to the *pitrloka* and, having enjoyed there for a period of time, come back to the world of the mortals to strive and to earn here the Consciousness of the Supreme.

Those who are meditating upon the M-sound of the syllable OM, guided by its presiding deity, the *Sama devata*, go to the world of the Total Mind and from there they gain 'progressive liberation' (*Kramamukti*) in due course.

All these three states have been already described in the previous *mantra* as those belonging to the realm of the finite only. But about those who have meditated long upon the OM syllable with all its letters together and have consistently put all their intense efforts in understanding the Supreme, the *mantra* says. '*The wise one reaches these and also that which is beyond*'.

We started this chapter with the words of the seer, '*The Syllable OM is indeed higher and the lower Brahman*,' meaning that it includes and incorporates in its vision, by suggestion and meaning, both the world of the finite and the realm of the Infinite. In the Infinite the finite world of plurality is but a delusory superimposition and as such, at the moment of the vision of the Infinite, the pluralistic world can no more be with us.

To see the post one has to see through and through the ghost. In this sense it is said here that those who have realised the OM completely as represented by its silent (*amatra*) aspect gain a mastery and freedom, a kingship and control, proprietorship and power over the world of the mortals, the world of the manes and the world of the Creator because all of them can exist but in the Supreme Consciousness. The knower of OM, apart from the above, also become Consciousness Itself and, as such, it is *not only these that he gains but that which is beyond*; when you give a gold necklace as a present to your sister she gets not only the necklace but also the gold, which is not called the necklace but which is the very substance of the necklace.

Herein we have one of the greatest definitions of the infinite Truth couched in the language of negation but seemingly sounding as though it is a direct scientific definition. It is said here that the wise one comes to experience that which is 'undecaying (*ajara*), deathless (*amrita*), fearless (*abhaya*) and Supreme (*parama*)'.

These terms are used with a special technical dexterity. From the finite the Infinite can only be pointed out; from the Infinite the finite cannot even be pointed out. The great rishis, having experienced the Infinite, have to explain it to us who are living the seeming realities of the finite and if they were to make us understand it, they have to talk to

us about it in our language of delusion. In our delusory existence we generally experience five great modifications during our life: birth, growth, decay, disease, and death. An ordinary mortal life is a round of these agonising fates and the consequent tears. Walking through the by-lanes of ignorance we slip at every step on the rocky surface made specially slippery with the tears of those who have walked over them before us. This being the common experience of every thinking seeker, the rishis have to explain the Infinite, the goal of life, to their disciples as a plane of existence wherein they will not have any of these sorrows.

We find here terms that negate our today's experiences, and this negative language at best can only indicate the experiences in the beyond. The term 'undecaying' only means that the experience of constant decay, which is part and parcel of our life now, will not be our lot there.

'Deathless' is the term used to suggest that the mortality that we are suffering *here*—not only in our physical structure but also in the outer world conditioned by the finite concepts of time and space—is again not *there* in the infinite.

'Fear' is the bugbear which seems to have been born with us and it remains with us all along so faithfully that it is doubtful whether even on the deathbed we can really get divorced from it, and it is the fear complex that taxes us the maximum and punishes us the most with largest doses of sorrows and failures in life. The infinite, being the one-without-a-second, cannot have 'fear' and so it is indicated here as 'fearless'.

If there is thus an undecaying, deathless, and fearless state of existence, our intellect may still ask us whether, after all, that factor is in itself the Supreme. Chances are that we may still wonder at the possible existence of something yet higher, a Truth that produces this Infinite. In order to show that the eternal, fearless, Brahman is uncaused, and yet is the cause for the total world of plurality, the rishi advises us that it is the Supreme (*Param*).

HERE ENDS THE FIFTH PRASNA

QUERY VI

SUKESA AND PIPPALADA

THE CREAM of this Upanishad is in its last query, in which there is a famous discussion on the *Purusha* with his 16 *kalas* (parts). In this discussion we will find that the Supreme Consciousness, the *Purusha*, is indicated not directly but through Its expressions and manifestations. The 16 *kalas*, as will be explained in this section, are expressions of life which are very well known in our work-a-day world. The method of explaining the *Purusha* is by bringing the entire attention of the student to the manifested symbols of life and thereby indicating that at the core of it all, as a substratum for the entire life, as the very cause of it all, is the vital, dynamic centre—the all-pervading *Purusha*.

This is the only method that will be practicable in a subjective quest after the divine spark that seems to be out of our cognition and experience in life. This is something like a coloured slide being observed by a student in his laboratory; in order to bring the structure of the cells vividly to the observer's view, slides are generally coloured or pigmented, and during the recording of the observations the student observes the slide so coloured but understands them as without the colour, the pigment in it only facilitates easy observation.

Similarly, the *Atman*, being the subtles of the subtle, is not available for the gross instruments of observation, feeling or comprehension but is available only for an intuitive understanding. Naturally, the teachers of the *Upanishad* had to adopt this method of first making us understand the various facets of the cut jewel of life and then making us feel as best as we could through our intuition, the total Truth which is the very basis on which all the different facets exist and from which they shine in their own glories.

Since the comprehension of the Reality is possible only through intuitive experiencing, it is the responsibility of the teacher to make the student evolve sufficiently through *upasanas*. That is why we have in all the previous five queries very many types of *upasanas* prescribed. Even in these sections we found that they were not mere methods of meditation. A lot of philosophical thinking was also doled out to provide sufficient exercise to the *upasaka's* mind and intellect to help them develop. In short, when we understand it sympathetically we can say that *Janana marga* (the path of knowledge) consists of a happy synthesis of both the intense technique of *bhakti* (devotion) and the philosophical contemplation prescribed in Vedanta. The student is made to practise *upasana* hand in hand with regular doses of philosophical contemplation.

Ultimately, this section is addressed to those who have understood the earlier five sections and have practised intelligently the methods of meditation prescribed so far. Then alone will they be able to start on the pilgrimage of subjective quest as indicated in this bold and courageous scheme of enquiry.

अथ हैनं सुकेशा भारद्वाजः पप्रच्छ ।
 भगवान् हिरण्यनाभः कौसल्यो राजपुत्रो मामुपेत्यैतं
 प्रश्नमपृच्छत । षोडशकलं भरद्वाज पुरुषं वेत्थ ।
 तमहं कुमारमद्भुवं नाहमिमं वेद । यद्यहमिममवेदिषं
 कथं ते नावक्ष्यमिति । समूलो वा ऐष परिशुष्यति
 योऽनृतमभिवदति । तस्मान्नाहाम्यनृतं वक्तूम ।
 स तूष्णीं रथमारुह्य प्रवव्राज ।
 तं त्वा पृच्छामि क्वासौ पुरुष इति ॥१॥

Atha hainam Sukesaa Bhaaradwaajah papraccha.

*'Bhagavan, Hiranya-naabhah Kausalyo Rajaputro
 maam-upetyaitam / prasnam-aprcchata.*

"Shodasakalam, Bharadwaaja, purusham, vettha?"

Tam-aham Kumaaram-abruvam. "Na-aham-imam Veda.

Yady-aham-imam-avedisham / katham te na avakshyam iti.

Sa moolo vaa esha parishushyati / yo-anrtam-abhivadati.

Tasmaann-aahaamya-nrtam vaktum."

Sa tooshneem ratham-aaruhya pravavraaja.

Tam tvua pricchami, kvaasau purusha? iti.

(1)

Then Sukeasa, son of Bharadvaja, questioned him. 'O Bhagavan, the Prince of Kosala. Hiranyanabha, once came to me and questioned, "O Bharadvaja, Do you know the Purusha of 16 parts?" I said to the youth, "I do not know him...If knew Him why should I not tell you? He who tells that which is not true is dried up verily. root, stem and branch. Therefore, I dare not utter falsehood." Having ascended his car he went away in silence. "That I ask you. where is that *Purusha* located?"'

The sixth disciple, who has been sitting silently all this while, now comes forward in this section to clear his doubt. His question, directly put, would look simple, for all that he wants to know is, where is the *Purusha* with the 16 parts located? But here we have a description of the whole circumstance under which the student got this doubt. In giving the genesis of his doubt we are tempted to believe that Mother *Sruti* had, perhaps, in Her mind, a secondary intention, ie., she wanted to indicate that there were among the seekers, even in those days, some who were more talkative than what was necessary or good for them! Do not argue against this theory: You will then only be justifying my theory!

However, the main justification for this report of the circumstantial facts is to bring out the necessary qualifications of a true Vedantic seeker. The Rajkumar of Kosala, necessarily a great patron by birth and status, visits the ashram of Sukeshya for *satsang* when he asks the *sadhu* what exactly is the meaning of the 16-*kala Purusha*. There is no hesitation in the mind of the spiritual seeker in the ascetic, to admit plainly his own ignorance it.

A true seeker of knowledge must be ready to own his ignorance; and yet how few of us can stand against the self-insulating challenge of knowledge not known! These are days when even an ignoramus would try to look wise with a simulated smile of wisdom. To cover ignorance with a look of wisdom seems to be the trademark of *Pundits* in these days of competitions and jure. Without hesitation, Sukeasa owned up his ignorance.

Herein we have also the dramatic beauty of the Upanishadic literature clearly brought out. The prosaic *Upanishad*, discussing dry philosophy, is no excuse for the rishis to ignore a dramatic situation; they exploit it to the maximum. Irresistible is the charm of art to those who have perfected it in themselves. Physical uncleanness, mental confusions or intellectual solvenliness, meanness in behaviour or lowness in thoughts or grossness in ideas—none of these can ever come from one whose heart is dancing in unison with the rhythm of the unity in diversity. Thus we find that even the casual thoughts of a perfected master have a

scriptural style of their own though he is unconscious of it. A casual glance through quotations from the *Bible* or the *Quoran*, the *Gita* or the *Upanishads*, the words of the Buddha or the declaratins of Ramakrishna, the lectures of Vivekananda or the talks of Ramana, the writing of Aurobindo or the songs of Meera will clearly show that when the mind is divinely composed and is resting in God-Consciousness, words gain a clear ring of sincerity and the construction gains a brilliance of its own. Thus, though not written as drama, the *Upanishads* here open with a description wherein all the dramatic possibilities have been carefully exploited.

When the Rajkumar hears Sukesha confessing his ignorance of the *Purusha* with 16 *kalas*, the prince refuses to believe it literally and insists upon getting an explanation from the ascetic. Sukesha continues to argue for establishing his own ignorance and says, *If I know Him why should I not tell you?* not willing to accept it and so the ascetic was compelled to continue his self-defence: *'He who tells that which is not true gets destroyed'* in the world of finitude as well as in the realm of the Infinite. How truthfulness is helpful in the material world has already been discussed.

With reference to a seeker's pilgrimage to perfection, truthfulness is considered by all schools of thinkers at the very top of their list of qualification. It has been discussed in the *Upanishad* more than once: according to the rishis, the path to Truth runs through Truth and is laid by slabs of Truth at every short distance. * To be dishonest or untruthful is to bring in a large amount of disintegration into our personalities.

Thus convinced, the prince, in pregnant silence, declaring at once his confusion, despair, disbelief and frustration, enters his car and rides away. In concluding this report the disciple asked the guru. *'That I ask you: Where is that Purusha?'* Here the word *where* not only denotes the place of its meditation but also the identity of the *Purusha*.

तस्मै स होवाच । इहैवान्तः शरीरे सोम्य स
पुरुषो यस्मिन्नैताः षोडशकलाः प्रभवन्तीति ॥ २ ॥

* Refer *Discourses on Mundakopnishad*, Mundaka III, section 1, mantra 6.

maï sa hovaacha, 'Iha-iva-antah-sareere, Somya,
s' purusho, yasmin-neitaah shodasakalaah prabhavanti' iti (2)

He replied, 'O Gentle Youth, That *Purusha* in whom these sixteen *kalas* are born is right here within the body.'

Here, in the *Brahmana*, the master is replying to the direct query which the student has raised, 'Where is the *Purusha*?' Divinity or perfection is not housed somewhere in an unknown and unapproachable heaven, away from the cognition and reach of ordinary folk; on the other hand, God or the Self is the nearest entity in us forming the very core of our existence. Just as our eyes can see only things that are distant from us and are incapable of seeing their own eyeballs or eyelashes, because of their nearness, so too divinity is not realized or recognised because of its very nearness. This will be explained better in the following stanzas. Here, however, the rishi is only concerned with pointing out that the *Purusha*, the central spark of the inner light, is right 'here' within the body.

If the Self is thus localised within the body it would certainly become conditioned and, as such finite. The external Reality, in Its own nature, must necessarily be the all-pervading Consciousness, and to limit this Infinite factor as the Truth localised within, is certainly a philosophical falsehood. At the same time, we cannot accept that the *Upanishad* would, without any benevolent intention, tell a lie.

This seeming contradiction is reconciled when we understand that the teacher here is not discussing the definition of the Infinite, but is only declaring a method of realising it. Since it is easier for us to realize subjectively the Truth factor within ourselves as the very core of our existence, it is explained here in the language of the teacher-taught discussion that '*this Purusha is here within.*' In fact, in its absolute nature it is to be realized *as at once nowhere and yet everywhere.*

Kalas are not exactly parts in the sense the hands and legs are parts of the human form; limbs are parts that give an entity a form, and all that have forms must necessarily perish. The imperishable and the eternal, therefore, cannot have limbs (parts in itself) but must necessarily be a homogeneous whole, the One-without-a-second. Therefore, the word *kala* here should not be translated as 'parts' because thereby we will be bringing down the Infinite to the status and destiny of the finite and the mortal.

Here *kalas* are to be understood as facets of a cut diamond or as the phases of the moon wherein, in spite of the seeming diversity and plurality, the diamond is one whole lump and the moon is ever undivided. In short, the *kalas* are to be described as parts of the all-pervading *Purusha* just as the hands, the legs, the head and the trunk, etc., of the ghost are all superimpositions upon the post. At the vision of the post all the limbs of the ghost disappear to merge in the 'reality of the post'. Similarly, on realisation of the *Purusha*, it will be understood that the *kalas* have no separate existence of their own.

And yet you may wonder why the rishis thus laboured to explain that which is false in such an elaborate fashion only to indicate at the end of it all that the *Purusha* which is the Reality behind them alone is true! This is the only method by which the Infinite can be pointed out to those who are living and experiencing the finite. An order to bring some water can be executed only by means of some vessel or the other, without that vehicle water cannot be conveyed. Similarly, the idea of the *Purusha* can be conveyed to the comprehension of our finite intellect only through its manifestations in and through life's warbling notes of rhythm and activity, of noisy cries of war and silent songs of peace, of the heated roars of hatred and the soothing songs of love. Therefore, the rishi was justified in the technique he had adopted, namely, explaining the Truth in and through Its own manifestations in the subjective world.

स ईक्षांचक्रे । कस्मिन्नहमुत्क्रान्त उत्क्रान्तो
भविष्यामि कस्मिन्वा प्रतिष्ठिते प्रतिष्ठास्यमिति ॥३॥

Sa eekshaamchakre. Kasmin naham utakraanta?
Utkraanto bhavishyaami? Kasmin vaa pratishthate?
Pratishthaasyaam?' iti.

(3)

He (*Purusha*) reflected, 'What is it by whose departure I shall depart and by whose stay I shall stay?'

Causation is the very stuff of the intellect and it is, as it were, the only method by which the intellect can understand and act. When this instrument is brought to comprehend the Eternal Reality, unborn and ever pure, Infinite and untouched by finitude, it must necessarily fail. But the best we can do is to reach up to the intellect's own level and then try to raise it above itself through suggestions and inferential deductions.

The creative urge in us cannot act and express itself unless it is driven by the motive force of desire; when we analyse the actions of man in the world of plurality we find that action is impossible unless it is pre-determined and guided by the force of desire. When we seek the source of thoughts we must necessarily come to the mouth of its source—the desires. Without a desire deep below, no seedlings of thoughts can sprout up.

Every flower need not necessarily fulfil itself in a fruit but every fruit presupposes at least a flower. There may be some desires which are not strong enough to burst out into conspicuous thought-forces but wherever there is thought it must have risen up from a desire behind it.

Desire is the expression of a want felt in ourselves and it is our attempt to fulfil the want that is being expressed as our desire. In our real nature we being the all-full (*paripoorna*), to feel this want is itself ignorance (*avidya*). Thus, when the great rishi analysed the source of all our sorrows he found that it was nothing but our ignorance about ourselves. The same ignorance expressed through the intellect is desire. The desires expressed in the mental zone are thought, and thought frozen and solidified is action; according to the actions we gain the fruits thereof which are called the fields of experience or the *loka*.

In this stanza, in an attempt to explain the causation chain in the finite world, the rishi points out how it all rose up from the supreme divine desire. He, the Lord of the Universe, the Creator, the Total Mind, desired or reflected or thought or meditated. The Total Mind, we have already seen, is the Creator, or the cosmic expression of the total creative urge. We have also found that It cannot express Itself into any modifications and come to exhibit its own glories without a desire propelling. It in the microcosm. All through the Vedantic discourses we have been reminded of the sacred Truth that the macrocosm is the microcosm and, therefore, as the individual so the Total Mind.

He contemplated on what should be the great vital factor that must dynamise the matter envelopments so that I, distinctly self-evident in my own nature, shall remain in this limited form and play the drama of finitude and its sorrows, and thus express Myself in My own Infinite variety! The ocean, desiring to express its own glory, goes into a horripilation, forming on the surface piles of mountainous waves and deafening roars. So too, the Creator thought about how best He could express Himself in His own illimitable vitality.

The physical structure endures only so long as the egocentric misconception exists to keep the elements constituting the gross body in a network of delusory charms! As far as Reality is concerned, it being all-pervading we need not make any special mention of it. When you are describing your meeting with your friend you may give all the details of his dress, his composure, his attitude, etc., but you need not complete the description by saying that your friend reached you carrying his head on his shoulders. If the head were dislocated from his shoulders the entire story would fall down lock, stock and barrel. Similarly, the story of creation cannot happen except in the eternal atmosphere of the Reality, and so we talk only of the ego—and wherever the ego is mentioned the *Atman* also is included: a reflection cannot be without the 'object' reflected.

Thus, in all attempts at explaining the evolution of the pluralistic world, a macrocosmic Creator is accepted and that Creator is to be given a line of thinking to contemplate upon or else creation of plurality cannot be maintained or explained. Thoughts give us the concept of the mind and the chart of the mind determines the shape of the world. The Creator, it is said here *contemplated upon what should be that factor at whose departure the body will come down and at whose contact the body shall maintain itself* singing its songs of pains and joys, thundering its roars of success and failure, breathing its sighs of gain and loss, weeping its tears of meeting and parting.

From what we have understood so far, it is certain that it is the ego-centre that maintains the body since the physical structure is planned, prepared and maintained for the ego to sing its song of life through the beats of its various experiences. The ego is the simulated self-forgetfulness of the Reality of its own eternal nature in its deliberate identification with the non-*Atman* (not-Self). The consequent bundles of false values in life force it to believe that it has to maintain its transactions in its own world of delusory nothingness. Without the various false matter envelopments the false identification will become impossible.

It is a fact that no lady can enter a room without her form, nor can her form run about without her! Similarly, the ego cannot be without the matter envelopments, and matter packings cannot exist intact and play their contentions without the egoistic self-arrogating dream factor, the ego. What the *Purusha* reflected upon was, with what vehicle shall I delude myself? What dress of matter shall I build up and having built, shall I enter to give it a substantial existence and a simulation of growth,

feelings, knowledge and vitality?

Since the contemplation of the Creator is on this line, in the following *Brahmana* we have been given a full description of the 16 different *kalas* which together constitute the matter vehicle in which the *Atman* comes to play its temporary game as the mortal and the immortal, the sinner and the saint, the seer and the seen, as the pitiable individual in the world or as the divine prophet from the other world.

A child at home contemplates upon the game she should play and the adornments she must have to play that game. To her, a wooden toy-pot on two stones in a corner of the drawing room is a kitchen! A doll is her own beloved child! Some bath-towels from the dressing room thrown over her body is sufficient makeup for her to feel that she is the mother of that house! As the mother she has to cook for the child and look after the child! And yet, she has not become the mother, she has nothing to cook, and she has no weeping child at any time to look after, all the time she is the child of the house... yet the game is to worry for the house not built, the child not born, the food not cooked, the worries that are not real!

Similarly, the *Atman*, eternally pure, ever the Infinite, has none of the limitations of the finite but it comes to live the experiences of the playful finitudes just as the child in the drawing room corner is creating a world of her own and believes that she has to attend to her self-imposed scheme of sorrowful duties and pressing responsibilities!

स प्राणमसृजत प्राणाच्छाद्वां खं वायुज्योतिरापः
पृथिवीन्द्रियं । मनोऽन्नं अन्नद्वीर्यं
तपो मन्त्राः कर्म लोका लोकेषु च नाम च ॥ ४ ॥

*Sa praanam-asrijata, praanaat-sraddhaam
kham vaayur-jyotir-aapah prithiveendriyam.
Mano-annam annadveeryam, tapo mantraah
karmalokalokeshu cha naama cha.*

(4)

He created the *Prana*. And from the *Prana* Faith, Akasa, Air, Fire, Water, Earth, the Senses, Mind, Food, Strength, thought, Mantra, Karma, the World, and in the world the different names also.

Here are the 16 *kalas* named and their sequences given in a seemingly unintelligent assortment which, without proper thought and guidance,

would read quite unintelligent and even idle. But one who has meditated upon these ideas can certainly come to understand the sequence and interconnections between the items enumerated herein. Certainly, we can come to understand that in their totality those 16 *kalas* constitute the world within and without the individual and the universe.

First, in order to create, there must be the egocentric energy, the *Prana*, which is the stuff on which the entire apple card of life is rolling on. But this energy, dynamic in creation, potential in creation and destruction, can come to play and express itself only when it is self-conscious. If the self-consciousness, as expressed in terms of its own *faith in itself*, is not truly wedded to itself, the *Prana* by itself can neither create nor manifest any of its component parts which alone constitute the vehicle for the ego to play its endless drama of birth and death! Thus, after the *Prana* comes a faith in itself or a consciousness of its own potential strength.

Thus when a self-conscious energy comes into play the rudiments of the mind are born, first in the concept of space (*akasa*) and the other four great elements together constituting the five macrocosmic elements. These very elements expressing themselves in the microcosm have already become the ten sense organs in us. To recapitulate, therefore, (1) *Prana*, (2) Faith, (3-7) the five great elements, (8) the senses...

When these eight items come into play, the focal point of all these becomes the mind and the mind gets crystallised in the breaker of the universe, growing in its sharp-cornered challenges; the sense organs, receiving their impulses, fatten the mind. When thus, (9) the mind is formed which is regularly provided with experiences of an outer world of plurality made up of the five elements, nature has to provide the mind with its nourishment and so the next in the serial of creation is (10) food. The food taken in gets digested to become (11) strength.

We have now at this stage of evolution a mind which is fed from outside with challenges, and from within with food and the mind so fattened and energised erupts out its (12) thoughts. Thoughts can either run into disintegrated wastefulness or can be conserved and directed into any right channel of thinking. Every human being, whether he is consciously training himself or not, has one solid trait of mental

* For the conception of Faith, see Query V, Brahmana 3.

character which is determined by the pattern towards which his thoughts gravitate in their general formation and flow. Under such a scheme of things the individual gains a capacity to direct and maintain his thoughts in a chosen line consistently for long and this capacity (*Manana sakti*) is indicated here by the term (13) *mantra*.

Mantras are generally translated as mystic words or formula collected and compiled in the four Vedas which are to be repeated and thought over sincerely, intelligently and consistently by students of the Vedas in order that they may raise themselves to higher planes of consciousness and vision. But in these days of our utter ignorance of the Vedas and our self-damaging want of our own scriptures, I would rather consider this in term of the more modern psychological suggestions that it declares. If a child, from childhood onwards, maintains a line of consistent thought to become a doctor or an advocate, the consistency can be indicated in the language of the Vedas as 'he is doing doctor-*mantra*' or 'he is doing advocate-*mantra*', etc.

Thoughts, classified and marshalled through consistent reflection (*manana*), order the mind into a definite pattern and this determines the texture, efficiency, sincerity and quality of actions. Thoughts, tracks in the mind ramble themselves into actions. Thus 14 *karma* evolves out of the thought patterns in ourselves: the 'advocate-*mantra*' makes one a lawyer and the 'doctor-*mantra*' ultimately makes one a doctor.

As the *karma* certainly is the (15) world created as a result of the activities, if the thoughts are animalistic, actions should be criminal and immoral. One who pursues such actions would thereafter be creating for himself a world of jails and by-lanes, back-doors and lock-picking, day-sleeping and night-walking. According to the world created by our actions there are the different (16) names: we are named — advocates or criminals, doctors or killers, judges or jailbirds, contractors or collectors, insurance agents or looters—according to our actions. Not only are we named but we also name our world of things and deeds in order to distinguish one from the other.

Thus there is, in fact, a beautifully scientific and a highly intelligent connection between all the 16 items enumerated in the *Upanishad*. They form the 16 facets of the same great *Purusha*. From the *Purusha* to the *kalas* is the direction of the seeming fall of the Infinite to finitude, the story of God's devolution to become the self-confused, self-arrogating man. He stands in the midst of the entire universe revolving around and about him, and himself becomes a child of his own delusory

delusions! Dazed and threatened by his own imaginations, he stands amidst them all—weeping and pathetically tearing his hair off.

In the following *mantra* we have been given an idea of how one who turns away from his own confusing world-dream and starts on the self-discovery adventure can, through discrimination and detachment, come to drop off the 16 *kalas*.

On reaching his destination in the Self he shall realise and discover that he is none but the *Purusha* and never had the *kalas* in him. It is in order to find the strength for the individual to accomplish this discovery of the *Purusha* that here rishi Pippalada of the *Prasnopanishad* has taken such laborious pains to explain the delusory *kalas* to us. The sacred scripture fulfils herself when she shows us ultimately that which is the Eternal Reality beneath the *kalas*.

The thickness of a mirror cannot be gauged by a mere look at its reflecting surface. Generally we put our finger on the surface of the mirror and then find the thickness by gauging the distance between the object, the thumb, and the reflection in the mirror. Touching the mirror with the finger is not gauging its thickness; looking at the finger on the mirror we shall not know the substance of the mirror, nor can we know the thickness by looking at the finger in the mirror. But by viewing at once both the object and the reflection and then intuitively recognising or understanding the distance between them is the only method known to gain the knowledge of it. Similarly here the *kalas* are described and in and through them, we are provided with glimpses of the eternal *Purusha*. In the following *Brahmana* we will be advised the way to reach the *Purusha* bare, transcending all the *kalas* and delusions.

स यथेमा नद्यः स्यन्दमानाः समुद्रायणाः
समुद्रं प्राप्यास्तं गच्छन्ति भिद्येते तासां
नामरूपे समुद्र इत्येवं प्रोच्यते ।
एवमेवास्य परिद्रष्टुरिमाः षोडशकलाः
पुरुषायणाः पुरुषं प्राप्यास्तं गच्छन्ति
भिद्येते ताऽऽसां नामरूपे पुरुष इत्येवं प्रोच्यते ।
स एषोऽकलोऽमृतो भवति तदेष श्लोकः ॥५॥

*Sa yathemaa nadyah syandamaanaah
samudraayanaah / samudram praapya-astam gachchanti.
bhidyete taasaam / naamaroope.*

*Samudra ityevam prochyate
 Evam-eva-asya paridrashtur-imaah shodasa-kalaah
 purushaayanaah purusham praapya-astam gachchhanti
 bhidyete taasaam naamaroope
 purusha ityevam prochyate.
 Sa esho-akalo-amrito bhavati,
 tadesha slokah.*

(5)

Just as these rivers, seaward bound, when they reach the sea disappear and get their names and forms liquidated into a oneness with the sea and all is called the ocean, so also these 16 *kalas* that go towards the *Purusha* disappear and their names and forms get destroyed and all is thereafter experienced as *Purusha* alone. He becomes without parts and immortal. On this there is a verse.

Here in this *Brahmana* the rishi explains how the egocentric concept rises out of the identification of the Self with the *kalas* and ultimately disappears when it turns inward towards its own Real Nature away from its false identification with the *kalas*.

We have found how the activity and inactivity temperaments in us cause the tossing and veiling of the mind which in their turn create the unmanifest emotions and thoughts, and the manifest world of sense organs and their objects.* The ego-centre, overgrown in its stature, fattened by its gluttonous and continuous feeding upon the experiences of sensuous life, becomes more and more extrovert in nature.

When it slowly tries to disentangle itself, at least temporarily from its preoccupations with the worlds of the body, mind and intellect it, to that extent, is destroying its own conditioning. As it were, it sets the flow of the *kalas* turn inward instead of their present outwards flow. And when they thus turn inwards, just as the rivers flowing towards the ocean reach their common destination and get themselves merged therein to become nothing but the ocean, so too the ego-centre becomes merged with the *purusha* and becomes one with him.

The different names and qualities of the rivers—the frolicsome *Jumna*, the queenly *Ganges*, the gushing *Brahmaputra*, the roaring *Krishna*, the mighty *Cauvery*, the rambling *Saraswati*—all come to surrender their different names, locations, qualities and arrogations to become one with the homogeneous waters of the ocean. ** From the

* Refer *Discourses on Kenopanishad*, Introduction: 'Fall and Rise of Man'.

** Explains *Mundakopanishad*, *Mundaka III*, section 2, mantra 8. As a *Brahmana Upanishad* it has to explain the mantras.

ocean the waters rise as vapour to form clouds which as rain come down to soak the lands and flow off as rivers back to the ocean and there again become merged with it and regain their own real nature. Similarly, from the *Purusha* rise the ego-centres and flowing through the 16 different *kalas* come back to the source of all energy, dynamism and life to become merged there into one homogeneous whole. This is the story of 'the end of the mortal' at the portals of his own Self-discovery.

The elder brother plays with the younger one just one afternoon for ten minutes the game of the 'big stick and the small stick'. For the time being he is a child, but thereafter he washes clean his hands and feet and enters the house again as the elder brother. Even while playing the child, he was but himself; but, in order to play the game, he had assumed for himself, for the time being, an identification with the child and its ways. Similarly, the *Purusha* who is ever the *Purusha*, eternal, divine, ever beyond the contamination of finitude, eternally reveeling in its own glory; but to play the game of plurality one afternoon for a short time, as registered in the clock of the Infinite, He started playing the seemingly endless game of birth and death!

On discovering the rope, the head, the tail, the mind portion, the slimness, the shiny spread, the hood, the vicious tongue, the fangs and the biting ability, the horrid colours of the serpent—all become merged with the 'reality of the rope'; so too, all the 16 *kalas* merge at the discovery of the reality of the *Purusha*. At the end of the serpent-vision the serpent-bite threat in the heart also is removed; similarly, when the *kalas* end, the *kala*-created stupid egoism and the pain-ridden egocentric existence all end in one flash. This idea could never be more beautifully brought out than by this inimitable metaphor of the rivers merging themselves in the ocean.

Now, one may reasonably ask, 'Why, Swamiji, should I thus turn inward and reach the hypothetical goal, the *Purusha*, and get myself merged there to become one, transcending all the *kalas*? why?'

To those who sincerely ask this question, the answer, according to Vedanta, is, 'My friend, there is no use *your* trying to do this; go out into the world and work honestly, earn truly, enjoy moderately and live a long life! Religion is meant only for those who have come to observe life with a scientist's detachment and have come to experience the hollowness of it and who, therefore, are struggling hard to get out of the destiny of pain and the anguish of confusion.'

The result of such an attainment of perfection has been clearly pointed out in the *mantra* when the rishi says 'He becomes the partless whole and immortal.' Mortality, we have already seen, is the destiny of the finite. So long as we are indentifying ourselves with *matter*, we shall be experiencing this incessant death produced by the 'spirit of change'. Mortality in such contexts is not only the experience of death in the sense in which we undertand it but implies and includes every experience of change which is an expression of finitude.

This statement of the rishi is being substantiated by him quoting the relevant *Veda mantra*. 'On this there is this verse,' says Pippalada.

अरा इव रथनाभौ कला यस्मिन्प्रतिष्ठिताः ।
तं वेद्यं पुरुषं वेद यथा मा वो मृत्युः परिव्यथा इति ॥६ ॥

*Araa iva rathanaabhau kalaa yasmin pratishthitaah
tam vedyam purusham veda yathaa maa vo mrityuh
parivyathaa iti*

(6)

Know that *Purusha* who ought to be known, in whom the *kalas* are centred like the spokes in the nave of a wheel...in order that death may not harm you.

The dependence of the *kalas* upon the *Purusha* cannot be more fully and beautifully described than is done here, explaining that they are connected to the central hub of the Whole, the *Purusha*, as the spokes of a wheel are connected to its central nave.* Earlier in this *Upanishad* also we have the use of this example.

The rim of a wheel gains its strength and capacity as it is supported as short distances by the spokes rising from the hub. The efficiency of the spokes depends entirely upon their tension which rises from the fact that they are held firmly together at the centre of the wheel by the hub. If the hub does not exist the spokes must lose their tension, and soon the very rim of the wheel must first get crooked and ultimately collapse.

In the core of the individual is the *Purusha* (or the *Atman*) and out of this centre of all efficiency in life diverge the 16 *kalas* which extend out to the very peripheral rim of the entire cosmos. The very pattern of enquiry in *Prasnopanishad* is a scientific analysis of this wheel of life constituting the world of objects and centred round the life spark in man

* Refer *Mundakopanishad*, Mundaka II, section 2, mantra 6.

which is the central hub, with the outermost circumference of the wheel lost in embrace of the entire universe of thoughts and ideas, things and beings.

To play on the rim of life without understanding the place of the hub in it, is to ignore the Reality and run after the shadow. To *ride on the wheel* is to get our selves established at the *centre* of the wheel; 'moving on wheels' means travelling in a car or in a train and in both cases we are established on the axle of the wheels—perfectly established in the centre of the wheels. But if, on the other hand, literally taking the words of the expression 'to move on wheel', a man hugs on to the tyres, certainly, at every complete rotation of the wheel to a length equivalent to its circumference, he must once get crushed and run over! In our life we refuse to come to the axle—to surrender to the *Narayana* who is the axle—but always live on the circumference and thus at every short period get ourselves crushed by the very wheel of life to which we are hanging on for security!

To understand the world outside—a mixture of joy and sorrow, success and failure, peace and agitation, etc.,—to be a pleasant delusion created by the rays of the *kalas* clashing and colliding among themselves into ever-changing patterns, is to get away from the dangerous existence *upon* the tyres of the wheels! When a thousand beams of light are made to shoot up at different angles towards the heavens, from a distance it would seem as a beautiful trellis of lightbeams standing in the atmosphere against the skies. This symmetry woven with beams of light in sheer space is not a firm and solid trellis over which we can hope to scale any heights! It may look substantial but the fool who tries to jump on to it shall fall each time and get himself lacerated at its base: the play of light is only to be enjoyed from a distance. Similarly, the world of plurality is caused by the play of the 16 beams shooting out in all directions from the central *Purusha* and these create the pattern of a universe of plurality which can accomplish no greater mission than providing an enjoyable sight for an 'onlooker' watching it in complete detachment and full discrimination.

To understand the pattern of beams is to understand the source of the different streams of light to be the electric current; similarly, when we are enquiring into the pleasant but delusory and false ego-created world of plurality, we must understand that it is made up of the 16 *kalas* and they all rise from the same source of Reality, eternal and immortal, the central *Purusha*. To know oneself to be no other than the *Purusha* is the

goal; thereby one is sure to get away from the threat in finitude and the fear of death. Hence the *Veda mantra* here says, 'In order that death may not harm you, know that Purusha.'

Not satisfied with this idea and its explanation, the guru insists that the disciple must strive to know this *Purusha* 'who ought to be known'. For, our life is not an empty dream; it is not idle holiday. It has a great purpose and a greater meaning than making and eating food. The call of life is to live, and to *live* is not merely earning and hoarding, eating and meeting, making and selling, producing and destroying, eating and meeting, making and selling, producing and destroying, learning and earning. There is a great mission with which man has come to live on the face of the globe; it is to rediscover himself to be, in fact, the lord all lords, the central *Purusha* in the entire play of its reflections (*bimbās*). Not to know the *Purusha* is indeed the greatest of tragedies; it is to lay waste our powers and miss a chance that has been given to us—so rare, so sacred, so divine.

तान्होवाचैतावदेवाहमे तत्परं ब्रह्म वेद ।
नातः परमस्तीति ॥७ ॥

Taan hovaacha-e-taavad-eva-aham-etatparam brahma veda.
Na-atah paramasti, iti. (7)

Then Pippalada said to them, 'This much alone do I know, the highest of the Brahman; there is nothing higher than this.'

With the *Veda mantra* which we have examined just now, *Prasnopanishad* is concluded and rishi Pippalada has nothing more to add on the topic of Self-realisation. In order to make the students realize that the topic of *Brahma vidya* has ended, the master makes here a direct statement.

When he said 'this much alone I know of this highest,' it smacked of a doubt inherent in itself that for still higher studies the disciples must approach some other master! Probably the same doubt flashed in the minds of disciples which was evident in their look, and so the rishi immediately added by way of explanation, 'There is nothing higher than this.' To know the central hub of life to be nothing but the dynamic seat of life in us, the *Purusha* or the *Atman*, is to realise at once the all-pervading Reality, the Knowledge and Bliss Absolute, eternal and

immortal, ever shining in its infinite beauty. There is nothing higher than the Self and to realise it is to gain the strength of all moral life and a consummate satisfaction (*kritakriyata*). To get ourselves awakened to this transcendental superconscious state of Pure Awareness and experience the *Purusha* in the all-pervading Reality is to reach what Darwin had suggested as the supermanhood, the supreme goal of Nature's evolutionary scheme.

ते तमर्चयन्तस्त्व हि नः पिता याऽस्माकविद्याया
परं पारं तास्यसीति । नमः परमऋषिभ्यो
नमः परमऋषिभ्यः ॥८ ॥

Te tam-archayantah 'Tvam hi nah pitaa
yo asmaakam avidyaayaah/param
paaram taarayaseeti.

Namah parama rishibhyo/namah parama rishibhyah.

(8)

They worshipping him said, 'Thou art our father who helps us to go across the ocean of our thick ignorance. Salutations to the highest Rishis! Salutations to the highest Rishis!!

When the great rishi Pippalada thus finishes his discourses and retires into his sacred silence of Pure Wisdom, satisfied with himself and his students, the disciples, in their turn, realising how much they owe to the teacher, try to express their sense of gratitude by these words of emotional and sentimental reverence and recognition.

A *Brahmavidya-guru* is considered here as 'Thou art our father'. This is because to realise one's own real nature, the Self, is really to be born again: and the birth of the *Brahmana* in one is fathered by the kind act of love of the teacher. With fatherly concern, devoted love and selfless anxiety did Pippalada tenderly treat each student to get him across the agonies of his doubts. Understanding for himself the condition of each student's mind and intellect again it was Pippalada, the guru, who like a father, nursed and nourished the students' inner personalities to make them sufficiently subtle and sensitive to grapple with, absorb and digest fully the highest Truth.

Therefore, the six students are crying together in one voice of love, 'Thou art our father.' It is a fitting conclusion in which the eternal students' feelings are snapped up and recorded for ever. Whatever be the clime, class, age or sex, wherever and whenever there is a fit student

coming across Pippalada to understand *Prasnopanishad*, he must necessarily, at the end of it, in a pure spirit of gratitude and incalculable sense of indebtedness, echo the same sentiment that exploded from these six students of extreme self-control and almost superhuman intellectual balance.

Both the teacher and the taught together thereafter salute the hierarchy of *gurus* and disciples who evolved the theory of *Brahma vidya*, lived it to their complete satisfaction and passed down the torch of knowledge to light the heart-lamps of the growing generations, all along the march of time.

Our own salutations to the highest Rishis!!
Salutations to the highest Rishis!!

इति षष्ठः प्रश्न

HERE ENDS THE SIXTH PRASNA

इति प्रश्नोपनिषद् समाप्ता

HERE ENDS THE PRASNOPANISHAD

Narayanayeti Samarpayami